

# On the Road



## CAROLINA A MIRANDA

### Coordinating Author

On this assignment, I literally ate my way through Lima. This gobble-fest was with a friend at a popular *chifa* (Chinese restaurant) in Barranco (p115). After carbo-loading on wontons, langostino fried rice and steamy piles of noodles, we were ready to destroy our livers at the neighborhood's many – and I mean *many* – bars.

**AIMEE DOWL** Southern Peru's archaeological riches get top billing, but northern Peru's mysterious ruins – mist-shrouded temples, haunting hilltop sarcophagi and mummies, mummies everywhere! – turned on the amateur archaeologist in me. My guide at Chavin de Huántar (p422) explained details about spine-chilling carvings that brought this ancient world to life.



**KATY SHORTHOUSE** Some bears and me in a village between Cuzco and Puno (p288). My intrepid traveling companion Steve Wilson and I hit the area as the sun went down, stumbling straight into a huge fiesta. The only gringos for miles around, we ended up with places of honor at the postparade festivities.

**BETH WILLIAMS** That claw protruding from the bottom of this photo belongs to the enormous *chupe de camarones* (shrimp chowder) I devoured after a trek in the Cañón del Colca (p187). It was well earned after a night spent in a leaky thatched hut at the base of the canyon – and they said rainy season was over!

**LUKE WATERSON** I'd been stranded for two days in the remote town of Pevás (p507), located on an Amazon tributary. No boats were headed back to civilization, so I hitched a lift on this raft. The 'captain' intended to sail on it all the way to the Atlantic Ocean!



For full author biographies see p560.



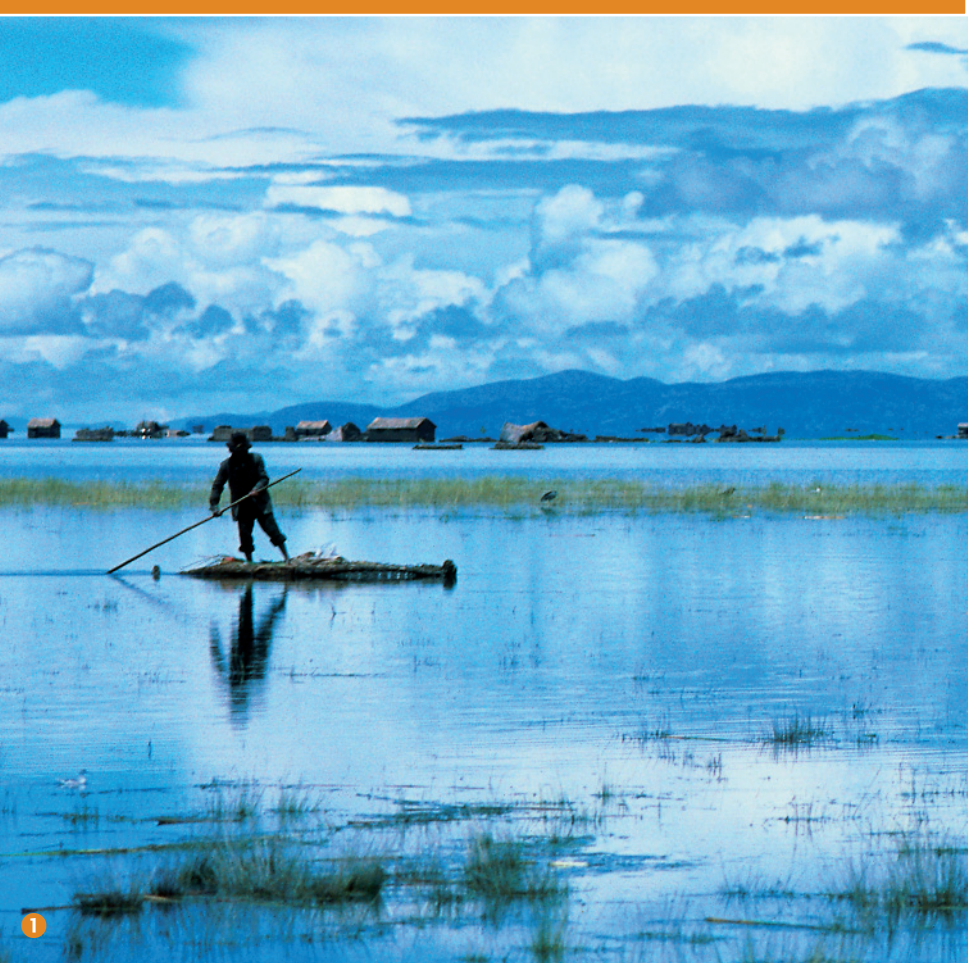
# BEST OF PERU

Clinging to the Andes, between the parched coastal desert and the drippy expanse of the Amazon rainforest, Peru offers such a wide range of experiences that it can be difficult to choose between them. Solemn pilgrimages honor gods both Christian and indigenous. Neon-lit discos get jam-packed with reveling youth. Ancient ruins regularly divulge bits of prehistory. And then, of course, there is the food – a bounty of sublime concoctions made from ingredients native and contemporary. Welcome to Peru – it's going to be one tasty trip.



# Essential Peru

There's north, there's south, desert and jungle. There are museums to visit, lakes to ogle, waves to surf, labyrinthine cities to explore – and enough ancient ruins to keep archaeologists employed for centuries. Where to start? This is our guide to a few essentials.





### 1 Lake Titicaca

Less a lake than a highland ocean, the Titicaca area is home to fantastical sights: floating islands made of totora reeds (p207), pre-Columbian funerary towers (p206) and fertility temples full of stone phalluses (p212). Far out.

### 2 Parque Nacional Manu

Covering an area the size of Wales, this vast Amazon reserve (p474) protects cloud forest and rainforest ecosystems – making for maximum wildlife-spotting. Not to be missed: the clay licks that draw hundreds of squawking macaws.

### 3 Monasterio de Santa Catalina

The eternally graceful city of Arequipa is home to this dazzling, citadel-sized monastery (p164), which dates back to the 16th century. It even has its own cafe, serving pastries and espresso.

### 4 Lima Nightlife

Tourism in Peru is devoted to the past, but Lima is all about the present. Here, discos spin international beats (p117), lounges serve frothy fusion cocktails (p115) and restaurants draw late-night crowds with a bevy of inventive dishes (p109).

### 5 Máncora

This internationally famous surf spot (p376) has something for everyone – even folks who don't hang ten. There's horse riding, hot springs and beach combing to fill the days, while street parties and beachside bonfires light up the nights.

### 6 Nazca Lines

The meaning behind these mysterious glyphs (p142) continues to elude scholars. Not that it matters. Their magnificence and breathtaking scale – which can only be appreciated from the air – make them a wonder to behold.

### 7 Kuélap

Archaeology buffs refer to the Chachapoyas people's mountaintop fortress (p448) as the 'other Machu Picchu,' but its unique stonework and proud position overlooking the Utcubamba valley make it a special – and incomparable – place to visit.

### 8 The Streets of Cuzco

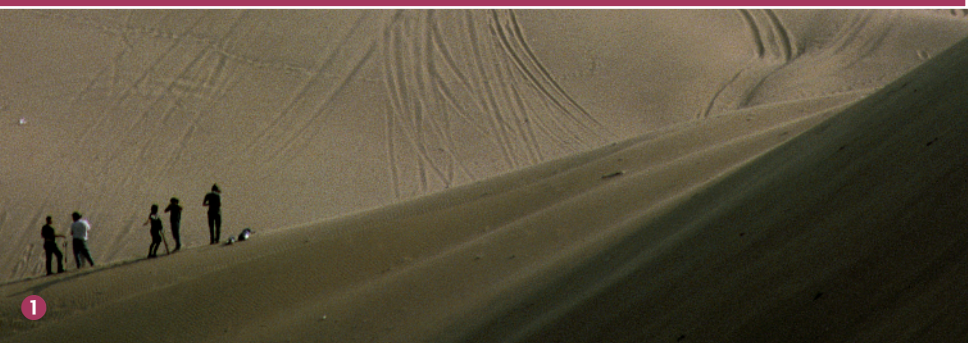
Once the capital of the Inca empire, tourist-thronged Cuzco (p220) – the gateway to the mountaintop refuge of Machu Picchu (p267) – is lined with extraordinary cobblestone passageways and indigenous structures that have been inhabited continuously since pre-Hispanic times.





## Natural Wonders

Get ready to send your vision into overdrive. Peru is home to snow-capped mountains, giant sand dunes, flocks of brightly hued tropical birds, postcard-perfect volcanoes and rocky Pacific outcroppings inhabited by argumentative sea lions. Here's a rundown of some of the most extraordinary.



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### 1 Huacachina

Towering, undulating dunes the size of small office towers hug the coastal desert oasis of Huacachina (p139). The craziest part? You can strap on a board and glide down the face of these monstrous, sandy waves.

### 2 El Misti

The snow-covered, pointy-peaked volcano that presides over Arequipa, El Misti (p169) can give Japan's Mt Fuji a run for its money when it comes to perfect form. It was venerated by the Incas, who sacrificed humans at its summit.

### 3 Islas Ballestas

Off Peru's arid southern shore, these rocky islands (p130) are home to colonies of sea lions, masses of endangered Humboldt penguins and lots and lots of boobies – brown boobies, that is.

### 4 Amazon Wildlife

Gaggles of cackling macaws, slinky jaguars, languid sloths, mighty anacondas, army ants and iridescent morpho butterflies – the Amazon is home to an astonishing array of extraordinary fauna. See prime examples at the Reserva Nacional Pacaya-Samiria (p493).

### 5 Puya Raimondii

If Dr Seuss designed a plant, this would be it: a 10m-tall behemoth (p72) that takes a century to burst into thousands of lily-white flowers, only to die shortly thereafter. Find forests of these in the central highlands (p326) and near Huaraz (p418).

### 6 Cordillera Blanca

Camping in these high-altitude valleys (p404) can make for the coldest nights of your life, but your first step into daylight is rewarded with soul-warming views of the jagged spine of glaciated peaks against an impossibly blue sky.

### 7 Marvelous Spatuletail Hummingbird

Few birds can compete with this species' extravagantly plumed male (p452), now much easier to see thanks to conservation efforts in the highlands. He's a small bird, but with a tail like that, he might as well be king of the jungle.

### 8 Puerto Pizarro

The sound of nothing but a crocodile moving through dark water adds to the magic of these ghostly endangered mangroves (p386). Visit this eerie world of swamp-rooted trees at dusk, when thousands of seabirds come home to roost.





## Culture & Tradition

This is a country where practices run deep – 5000 years, to be exact. Yet, it is a place continuously energized by fresh influences. In Peru, you can groove to African beats, attend solemn Catholic processions and examine indigenous textiles inspired by pre-Columbian tradition. Take your pick.





### 1 Arts & Crafts

Regal ceramics, detailed dioramas, elaborate reproductions of Cuzco School paintings and handwoven indigenous textiles with intricate designs are evidence of Peru's artful soul. Find the best in Lima (p118), Ayacucho (p324), Huancaayo (p312) and Cuzco (p252).

### 2 Inti Raymi

An annual ceremony in honor of the Inca sun god, Inti Raymi (p240) was prohibited by the Spanish for centuries. Visitors to Cuzco, however, can see an interpretation of this pomp-filled ceremony (sans animal sacrifice) every June.

### 3 Lima

Narrow streets cluttered with baroque churches. Rambling colonial structures clad with elaborate balconies. Atmospheric eateries and museums stuffed with pre-Columbian treasures. The web of streets (p87) laid out by Francisco Pizarro in 1532 are still full of life.

### 4 Verano Negro

Celebrating Afro-Peruvian culture, this festival in the district of El Carmen in Chincha (p128) features food, music and lots of dance – much of it set to the distinct thump of the *cajón*, a wooden box used as a drum.



### 5 Holy Week in Ayacucho

Catholic rites in Peru don't get more extravagant or brilliantly illuminated than in the central-highland settlement of Ayacucho (p321), where parades and processions mark the week before Easter.

### 6 Asháninka Culture

An Amazon tribe known for fiercely resisting acculturation (even from Sendero Luminoso's terrorists) and for their delicate, geometric textiles, the Asháninka people welcome visitors to villages outside of Puerto Bermúdez (p484).





# Taste of Peru

To begin to savor the vast selection of delicacies could take weeks – even months. Every little bend in the Andes produces a divine local dish, featuring everything from rare strains of potato to guinea pig to succulent ocean mollusks. Here's our list of the flavors not to miss.

CAROLINA MIRANDA

## 1 Causas

Potato dishes come in all manner of scrumptious forms in Peru, but none as sculptural as these incredible potato salads (p58), constructed in a rainbow of colors and stuffed full of vegetables, seafood and chicken.

## 2 Cuy

The Andes' most famous contribution to the world of animal protein: the guinea pig. Small, flavorful, with just the right amount of fatty crispness. Cuzco (p246) is the spot to nibble on these.

## 3 Pisco Sour

The national cocktail (p60), crafted from the local grape brandy with fresh lime juice, sugar and a splash of bitters, is lip-smackingly good. They taste innocuous but pack a punch.

## 4 Ceviche

Fish or seafood marinated in lime juice, with onion, chilies and a dash of cilantro – it is divinely delicious. The best place to taste this lunchtime staple is Lima (p109), whose busy port assures fresh treats plucked straight from the sea.

# Destination Peru

For a country born of a tumultuous history, Peru has its moments of incredible grace. There is the award-winning literature, the baroque-style architecture, the soulful music and, of course, the food – a sublime combination of ethnic and regional specialties that have spent the last 500 years on a slow simmer and are now ready to be served. Peru, in case you haven't heard, is in the midst of a buzzing culinary renaissance.

Led by a charismatic young chef named Gastón Acurio, the country's native cuisine is the subject of write-ups in international food magazines. Once regarded as a charmless capital city, Lima is now a bastion of excellent dining. And Peruvian gastronomic festivals – once the purview of a few dedicated food-service types – attract tens of thousands of visitors. La Mistura, a culinary gathering organized by Acurio, drew more than 150,000 people from all over Peru and the world to its second annual convocation in Lima in September of 2009. Thousands more were unable to get in.

The relentless focus on food – and it is *relentless* – has not only generated a great deal of pride among every layer of Peruvian society, it has had a ripple effect on other aspects of the culture. Young fashion designers produce avant-garde clothing lines with alpaca knits. Cutting-edge musical groups fuse elements of regional folk music into mainstream electronica. In the world of architecture, builders are starting to create contemporary structures that pay tribute to pre-Columbian design. In other words, Peru is experiencing a remarkable cultural boom.

The country has also experienced a period of unparalleled economic expansion, linked to significant growth in the mining and agricultural sectors. Since 2004, Peru's gross domestic product has grown steadily, year after year – even in 2008 and 2009, when the global economy was shrinking. The influx of wealth has helped alleviate some of the most extreme cases of poverty and has allowed the administration to improve infrastructure and expand social services. By 2011, the government expects to complete a US\$1 billion electrification project, which will improve energy delivery to the southern part of Peru.

This represents an incredible turnaround for a nation that was torn apart by a period of protracted internal conflict between the military and various guerrilla groups in the 1980s and '90s – an episode that left thousands of civilians dead and countless others displaced. Peru has yet to completely emerge from the shadow of that era. For two years beginning in 2007, the nation was riveted by the legal trials of former President Alberto Fujimori.

Elected in 1990, in the midst of the conflict, Fujimori, the Lima-born son of Japanese immigrants, cracked down on guerrilla groups, but also tightened his grip on power. Among other things, he staged a coup that filled the legislature with his cronies, reworked the constitution and ran all manner of shady financial and political operations while in office. His presidency ended in 2001, when his security chief was caught on camera bribing just about any official willing to accept a suitcase full of money. The disgraced former president is now serving almost three decades of prison terms for an array of convictions, ranging from embezzlement to bribery to wiretapping to the ordering of extrajudicial killings. But that isn't the end of Fujimori. It is widely expected that his daughter, Keiko, a congresswoman, will run for the presidency in 2011. She has hinted that if she wins, she will pardon her father.

Peru faces other challenges as well. A prolonged global recession could put a quick end to this period of growth. (Economic figures already

## FAST FACTS

Population: 28.2 million

Median age: 26 years

Poverty rate: 54%

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): US\$131.4 billion

Estimated hectares of coca production: 56,000

Rate of inflation: 5.8%

Navigable tributaries in the Amazon Basin: 8600km

Average daily visitors to Machu Picchu: 2500

Loss of forest area in 2005: 150,000 hectares

Native varieties of potato: almost 4000



indicated a slow-down in the export market by the end of 2009 and inflation tripled – to 6% – from 2008 to 2009.) Equally fragile is the political situation. President Alan García, who served a disastrous first term as president in the '80s (see p42), has seen his approval rating steadily sink since he took office in 2006. In 2008, his entire cabinet was forced to resign due to allegations of corruption. And, in 2009, a clash between various indigenous tribes and the national police – over development rights to extensive tracts of rainforest lands – left almost three dozen dead in the remote northern region of Bagua.

These events have left the president with a weakened mandate at a potentially fractious time. Members of the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) guerrillas have shown renewed (if limited) signs of life in the central highlands around Ayacucho. In the Amazon, the imminent opening of the Inter-oceanic Highway, connecting Peru to Brazil and running straight through the southern Amazon, could have a negative impact on delicate rainforest ecosystems. And there is still plenty of poverty to contend with: despite the years of growth, one in five Peruvians still lives on less than US\$2 a day.

To some, the country's problems might seem insurmountable. But living in Peru – and being Peruvian – has always required just a little bit of defiance. In the 1950s, Peruvian journalist Jorge Donayre Belaúnde penned a lengthy poem to his homeland called '*Viva el Perú...¡Carajo!*' (Long Live Peru...Damn It!). The verse is an epic, warts-and-all tribute to Peru, depicting life in Andean villages as well as sprawling urban shantytowns. Peruvians, wrote Donayre, aren't scared off by difficult circumstances – not by cataclysmic earthquakes, nor difficult geography, nor the bad habits of their wily politicians. In the face of adversity, there is an intractable optimism. In the 50-plus years since Donayre first wrote those words, that hasn't changed one bit.

*Viva el Perú...¡Carajo!*

# Getting Started

Luminous archaeological sites? Check. Lush Amazon rainforest? Check. An arid coast lapped by a highly surfable Pacific swell? Check.

Peru, it seems, has it all. Every cranny of this part of the Andes offers a unique glimpse into singular cultures, incredible foods and enough natural wonders to keep a *National Geographic* cameraman employed for decades.

Visit for a week and you can take in a main site or two. Got two? Then join a trekking party, or add another destination to your itinerary. And if you have plenty of time on your hands, strap on a pack and hit the road for months – there's that much to do. Best of all, transportation is plentiful and generally inexpensive, and accommodations are available to suit every budget, from cheap backpacker hostels to atmospheric colonial mansions.

This chapter will help you figure out when to go, what to pack, how much to spend and which places you won't want to miss.

## WHEN TO GO

Peru's climate has two main seasons – wet and dry – though the weather varies greatly depending on the region. Temperature is mostly influenced by elevation: the higher you climb, the cooler it becomes.

The peak tourist season is from June to August, which coincides with the cooler dry season in the Andean highlands and summer vacation in North America and Europe. This is the best (and busiest) time to go trekking – on the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, or anywhere else. It's also the best time for climbing, hiking and mountain biking.

People can and do visit the highlands year-round, though the wettest months of December to March make this a cold and muddy proposition. Plus, during February the Inca Trail is closed for cleanup. Many of the major fiestas (see p517), such as La Virgen de la Candelaria, Carnaval and

A Peruvian weather site (in Spanish) is [www.senamhi.gob.pe](http://www.senamhi.gob.pe).

## DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- A passport valid for six months beyond your trip and, if necessary, a visa (p526).
- All recommended immunizations (p544) – make sure any prior vaccinations are up-to-date before setting off.
- A copy of your travel insurance policy (p520).
- An ATM or traveler's-check card with a four-digit PIN (p521).
- Reservations for trekking the Inca Trail (p283) or, better yet, an alternative route (see boxed text, p285).
- A lightweight, wind-resistant waterproof jacket to shield you from the sun and keep you dry.
- Earplugs – long-distance buses and many hotels enjoy ear-splitting entertainment at all hours.
- A Swiss Army-style knife – remember to place it in your checked luggage when flying or it will be confiscated.
- Duct tape – make a mini-roll around a pencil, then use it to repair backpacks, seal shut leaky bottles etc.
- Toilet paper – essential as public toilets (p525) and most restaurants don't supply it.
- Your sense of adventure.



See Climate Charts (p513)  
for more information.

Semana Santa, occur in the wettest months and continue undiminished even during heavy rainstorms.

On the arid coast, Peruvians visit the beaches during summer, from December through March, when the Pacific's chilly waters warm up. In central and southern Peru, the coast is cloaked in *garúa* (coastal fog) for much of the rest of the year and temperatures are cool. As a result, southern beaches tend to be deserted during this period. In the far north, the coast usually sees more sun (and the water is warmer), so beach lovers can be found there year-round.

In the eastern rainforest, of course, it rains – a lot. The wettest months are December through May. And while it is still possible to travel through the Amazon at this time, it will be slow going, and wildlife-viewing opportunities will be reduced. The best times to go are the drier months of July and August, followed by September, October and November.

## COSTS & MONEY

### HOW MUCH?

Local phone call \$1.50

Internet café per hour  
\$1-2

Short taxi ride (not in  
Lima) \$3

Double room with  
bathroom and TV  
\$100

Round-trip flight  
between most cities  
from US\$150

See also the Lonely  
Planet Index, inside front  
cover.

Shoestring travelers watching their *céntimos* – by sleeping in dormitory rooms, traveling on economy buses, eating set menus – can get by on a minimum of US\$25 a day. Visitors who prefer private hot showers, à la carte meals in moderately priced restaurants, comfortable buses and occasional flights will find that at least US\$60 to US\$100 a day should meet their needs. Staying at luxury hotels and dining at top-end restaurants will cost several hundred dollars a day. Prices are always higher if you're doing your trip by organized tour (see p534). The most expensive cities are Cuzco and Lima.

You can stretch your budget by traveling with a partner as double rooms are usually less expensive than two singles (see p508). Hone your bargaining skills – taxi cabs don't have meters, and drivers routinely overcharge gringos. Hotels often give discounts if you simply ask for their 'best price' (*el mejor precio*) or if you inquire about promotional rates. For top-end places, check the website for special offers.

Many restaurants offer filling three-course set lunches for around \$7; eating à la carte will triple your bill. Pay with cash rather than credit cards, in order to avoid hefty surcharges. Many Peruvian ATMs dispense local currency (*nuevos soles*) and US dollars. Above all, keep your money safely stashed – an economical trip can get expensive if you're pickpocketed! For tips on avoiding theft, see p514.

Note to adventurers on a tight budget: hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu is expensive. Unguided trips are now illegal (this is strictly enforced) and the cheapest four-day trips start at around US\$300 per person, not including equipment rental, tips for the guides and porters, or any incidental expenses, such as bottled water. Plan on spending US\$400 if you're going with a reputable outfitter, p286. A day trip to Machu Picchu isn't always cheap either (see p255).

For exchange rates, see the inside front cover of this book. For more information on money issues, see p521.

## TRAVEL LITERATURE

*Inca Land: Explorations in the Highlands of Peru*, by Hiram Bingham, is the classic traveler's tale. The book was first published in 1922, a little more than a decade after the American author 'discovered' the ancient Inca citadel of Machu Picchu.

*The White Rock: An Exploration of the Inca Heartland*, by Hugh Thomson, describes a filmmaker's search for hidden archaeological sites throughout the Peruvian Andes and Bolivia. It includes a lot of background on earlier travelers and explorers.

# TOP PICKS

PERU

Brazil

Lima

## THE BEST FIESTAS

Hallowed religious processions and resuscitated Inca ceremonies – Peru's hallucinatory festivals go off year-round (see p517 for the full list). Our favorites:

- Virgen de la Candelaria (February 2) – Puno's festive, multi-day tribute to the Virgin offers plenty of highland music and dance (p198)
- Carnaval (before the start of Lent) – elaborate costumes and crazy water fights are at their most boisterous in Cajamarca (see boxed text, p433)
- Semana Santa (Holy Week) – an important event around the country, but no town beats Ayacucho for its spectacular religious processions (p321)
- Q'oyoriti (May/June) – a Christian pilgrimage with animist overtones held on a chilly mountain in the Cuzco region (see boxed text, p295)
- Inti Raymi (June 24) – Cuzco's 'Festival of the Sun' is a tradition with Inca roots (p240)
- Fiestas Patrias (July 28–29) – Peru's National Independence Days can be enjoyed anywhere and everywhere (p517)
- Feast of Santa Rosa de Lima (August 30) – the continent's first saint is heralded around the country, but colorful processions abound in Lima (p103)
- El Señor de los Milagros (October 18) – all the pomp and circumstance of a religious procession with everyone and everything decked out in purple (p103)

## FOR A RAGING ADRENALINE RUSH

From Andean highlands to Amazon rainforests to arid coastal deserts, Peru is an all-seasons playground. You will find the complete guide to outdoor activities on p173 and a directory of the top parks and wilderness areas in the boxed text, p74. Try these for some of the most thrilling activities:

- Scale Peru's highest peak Huascarán, which stands at a gasping 6768m, outside Huaraz (p404)
- Sandboard the colossal, high-altitude sand dunes on the south coast at Huacachina (p140)
- Trek into the craggy Cordilleras – Blanca and Huayhuash – where you'll travel through remote indigenous villages and alongside glistening Andean glaciers (p401)
- Run the rapids on the Río Tambopata on a 10- to 12-day trip, which plunges from the Andes straight into Amazon rainforest (p235)
- Surf legendary waves, including one of the world's longest left-hand breaks, on Peru's north coast (p381)
- Trek two of the world's deepest canyons, the Cañóns del Colca and Cotahuasi, near Arequipa (p169)

## PERU, THE SURREAL

Seen it? Done it? Been there? Not in Peru, you haven't. A very necessary guide to the country's most unusual experiences:

- Eat dirt in Sillustani, literally (p206)
- Admire the skulls of revered saints at a storied colonial church in Lima (p90)
- Visit an art gallery...in the middle of the Amazon (p507)
- Dine on tasty felines in the mountain town of Huari (see boxed text, p425)
- Gaze upon an Inca maiden – in a freezer – at the Museo Santury in Arequipa (p165)
- Have a shaman cure what ails you in Huanacabamba, on Peru's north coast (see boxed text, p374)
- Sashay into a neon-lit, fish-tank-encrusted *Miami Vice*-style dance club in the ancient Inca capital of Cuzco (p251)
- See ancient whistling pots in a well-known archaeological museum...that resides in the basement of a gas station in Trujillo (p345)



*At Play in the Fields of the Lord*, by Peter Matthiessen, is a classic, superb and true-to-life novel about the conflicts between the forces of 'development' and indigenous peoples in the Amazon jungle.

*Trail of Feathers: In Search of the Birdmen of Peru*, by Tahir Shah, is an amusing tall tale about what lies behind the 'birdmen' legends of the Peruvian desert, eventually leading the author to a tribe of cannibals in the Amazon.

*Cut Stones and Crossroads: A Journey in the Two Worlds of Peru*, by Ronald Wright, is a comprehensive journey through some of Peru's ancient cities and archaeological sites, and it comes with helpful guides to Quechua terminology and traditional Andean music.

*Eight Feet in the Andes: Travels with a Donkey from Ecuador to Cuzco*, by Dervla Murphy, is an insightful, witty travelogue of this peripatetic travel writer's 2000km journey with her daughter through remote regions, ending at Machu Picchu.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

For many more websites targeted to specific topics, such as volunteering in Peru or gay and lesbian travel, thumb through the Directory at the back of this book, starting p508.

**Andean Travel Web** ([www.andeantravelweb.com/peru](http://www.andeantravelweb.com/peru)) Independent travel directory with loads of links to hotels, tour companies, volunteer programs etc.

**Expatriate Peru** ([expatperu.com](http://expatperu.com)) Helpful site that details important government and other resources; has a complete listing of immigration offices and customs regulations.

**Latin America Network Information Center** ([www.lanic.utexas.edu](http://www.lanic.utexas.edu)) The University of Texas provides hundreds of informative links on all subjects.

**Living in Peru** ([www.livinginperu.com](http://www.livinginperu.com)) This English-speaking expats' guide is an excellent source of Lima-centric news; the site has a handy events calendar.

**Peru Links** ([www.perulinks.com](http://www.perulinks.com)) Thousands of links on a range of topics; many are in Spanish, some in English. Editor's picks and top 10 sites are always good.

**Peruvian Times** ([www.peruviantimes.com](http://www.peruviantimes.com)) The latest news, in English.

**PromPerú** ([www.peru.info](http://www.peru.info)) The official government tourism agency, with a good overview of Peru in Spanish, English, French, German, Italian and Portuguese.

**The Peru Guide** ([theperuguide.com](http://theperuguide.com)) A broad travel overview to the country.

# Itineraries

## CLASSIC ROUTES

### THE GRINGO TRAIL

Two to Four Weeks / Lima to Cuzco

Leaving **Lima** (p78), journey south to **Pisco** and **Paracas** (p129), where you can catch a boat tour to the wildlife-rich **Islas Ballestas** (p130). Then it's on to **Ica** (p136), Peru's wine and pisco (grape brandy) capital, and the palm-fringed, dune-lined oasis of **Huacachina** (p139), famous for sandboarding. Next is **Nazca** (p141), for a flight over the mysterious Nazca Lines.

Turn inland for the 'White City' of **Arequipa** (p160), with its colonial architecture and stylish nightlife. Go trekking in **Cañón del Colca** (p187) or **Cañón del Cotahuasi** (p193) – perhaps the world's deepest canyon – or climb **El Misti** (p169), a postcard-perfect 5822m volcano. Then it's upwards to **Puno** (p198), Peru's port on **Lake Titicaca** (p207), one of the world's highest navigable lakes. From here you can visit traditional islands and the *chullpas* (ancient funerary towers) at **Sillustani** and **Cutimbo** (p206).

Wind through the Andes to **Cuzco** (p220), South America's oldest continuously inhabited city. Browse colorful markets and explore archaeological sites in the **Sacred Valley** (p258), then trek to **Machu Picchu** (p267) via an adventurous **alternative route** (p285).



This loop starts in Lima, zips down along the coastal desert, climbs to Arequipa and Lake Titicaca and ends at Machu Picchu. It is one of the most popular routes on the continent. You could do much of this in two weeks, but a meandering month is ideal.

## ONLY THE BEST OF PERU

### Four Weeks / Lima to Máncora

Get over your jet lag with some fine cuisine in **Lima** (p109), then head south through the coastal desert for a flyover of the **Nazca Lines** (p142) before arriving in stylish, cosmopolitan **Arequipa** (p160), with its mysterious monasteries, deep canyons and smoking volcanoes. Fly high into the Andes to reach the ancient Inca capital of **Cuzco** (p220) for a few days of acclimatization before boarding the train to **Machu Picchu** (p267), the most visited archaeological site in South America.

From Cuzco, fly to **Puerto Maldonado** (p460) to stay at a wildlife lodge along one of the mighty rivers in the Amazon Basin. Alternatively, take an overland tour from Cuzco to the **Manu area** (p474), where a Unesco-listed haven protects the priceless rainforest. Another option for exploring the Amazonian *selva* (jungle) is to first fly back to Lima, then onward to **Iquitos** (p494).

Back in Lima, take a bus or fly north to the adventurers' base camp of **Huaraz** (p389), where a short trek will take you to the precipitous peaks of the **Cordillera Blanca** (p404). A day trip to **Chavín de Huántar** (p422) will lead you to one of Peru's oldest ancient sites. Rumble back down to the coast at **Chimbote** (p340), then dash north to historic **Trujillo** (p342), which is surrounded by a cornucopia of archaeological sites. These include the ruins of the largest pre-Columbian city in the Americas, **Chan Chan** (p349), and the fascinating **Huacas del Sol y de la Luna** (p351). Finish up the journey with a seaside break at the bustling surf town of **Máncora** (p376).

If you want to  
get a taste of  
everything, this  
whirlwind tour hits  
Peru's top must-  
see attractions.  
Give yourself a full  
month if you want  
to brag that you've  
really seen it all.





## ROADS LESS TRAVELED

### NORTH COASTIN'

Three Weeks / Lima to Tumbes

The first stop north of **Lima** (p78) could be **Caral** (p338), where the oldest known civilization in South America arose about 5000 years ago. Further north is the gruesome ancient site of **Sechín** (p339), although many travelers prefer to continue to **Trujillo** (p342). Nearby attractions include the well-preserved Moche pyramids of **Huacas del Sol y de la Luna** (p351) and the ruins of the once-mighty **Chan Chan** (p349).

Off the sleepy beaches at **Huanchaco** (p352), modern surfers paddle out to the breakers alongside local fishers in traditional reed canoes. En route to Chiclayo is the surf spot of **Puerto Chicama** (p357), which boasts one of the world's longest left-hand breaks. Then it's **Chiclayo** (p358), with several nearby towns that contain world-class museums showcasing riches from the important archaeological site of **Sipán** (p364).

**Piura** (p367) is a hub for visiting the craft markets and *picanterías* (local restaurants) of dusty **Catacaos** (p371), or the witch doctors of **Huancabamba** (p373), hidden away in the Andes. Peru's best beaches lie along the Pacific shoreline heading further north, and resorts such as **Máncora** (p376) offer lots of places to munch on great seafood and dance the balmy nights away.

The journey ends at **Tumbes** (p382), a gateway to Ecuador. It's the jumping-off point for visiting Peru's endangered mangrove swamps, which are teeming with wildlife (watch out for the crocodiles!).



Straight as an arrow, the Pan-americana Norte passes archaeological sites, renowned surf spots, colonial cities and museums with fascinating artifacts. Hemingway liked it – you will too. Unless you're in a hurry to reach Ecuador, you'll want to spend a minimum of two weeks on your journey.

## BACK DOOR INTO THE AMAZON

Two Weeks / Chiclayo to Iquitos

Leaving **Chiclayo** (p358), with its nearby ancient ruins and witches' market, take a bus over the Andean continental divide to **Chachapoyas** (p441), a base for visiting the isolated, untouristed fortress of **Kuélap** (p448), dating from AD 800, and many other remote, barely known archaeological sites. Chachapoyas can easily be reached in 10 hours from Chiclayo, traveling along the quicker paved road via the highland jungle town of **Jaén** (p441), a remote border crossing to Ecuador.

Hardier travelers can take the wild, unpaved, longer route to **Cajamarca** (p429), a lovely highland provincial town where the Inca Atahualpa was imprisoned by Spanish conquistadors. Outside of the wet season, continue on the slow, spectacular route to friendly **Celendín** (p439) and on to **Leimebamba** (p449) to see the Marvelous Spatuletail hummingbird (p450). Then, continue on the scenic but kidney-busting drive to Chachapoyas (p441).

From Chachapoyas, take the unpaved road to **Pedro Ruiz** (p451), where transportation is readily available to **Tarapoto** (p453). Break your journey here to hike to high jungle waterfalls. The last road section travels to **Yurimaguas** (p491), where on most days you can find cargo boats that make the two-day trip to **Iquitos** (p494) via the village of **Lagunas** (p492), the best entry point to the **Reserva Nacional Pacaya-Samiria** (p493). Hammock or cabin space is readily available. Don't expect much comfort, but the trip will provide an unforgettable glimpse of the world's greatest river basin. At Iquitos, you can arrange boat trips that go even deeper – and on into Brazil.

This route crosses the little-traveled northern highlands by road and ends at the Amazonian port of Iquitos – the largest city in the world that cannot be reached by road. Hurrying locals get from Chiclayo to Iquitos in less than a week; curious travelers might take a month.



## JUNGLE BOOGIE

### Four Weeks / Cuzco to Iquitos

More than half of Peru is made up of jungle, which dramatically drops away from the eastern slopes of the Andes and deep into the Amazon Basin – stretching all the way to the Atlantic.

The most popular excursion starts from **Cuzco** (p220 and p289) and heads to the **Manu area** (p474), itself the size of a small country and full of jungle lodges and wildlife-watching opportunities. Or you can fly from Cuzco to **Puerto Maldonado** (p460) and rent a thatch-roofed bungalow with a view either along the **Río Madre de Dios** (p467), the gateway to lovely **Lago Sandoval** (p470), or along the **Río Tambopata** (p471), where a national reserve protects one of the country's largest clay licks. During the dry season (July and August), it's possible for hard-core types to travel overland back to Cuzco.

With the south out of the way, you can turn your attention to the north. The easiest way to get there is to fly to Lima, then onward to **Pucallpa** (p484), near **Yarinacocha** (p489). The lake in this area is ringed by tribal villages, including those of the matriarchal Shipibo people, renowned for their pottery. A more challenging bus journey reaches Pucallpa from Lima via the coffee-growing settlement of **San Ramón** (p480) and the miniscule village of **Puerto Bermúdez** (p484), the stronghold of Peru's largest Amazon tribe, the Asháninka.

From Pucallpa, begin the classic slow riverboat journey north along the **Río Ucayali** (p488) to **Iquitos** (p494). This northern jungle capital has a floating market and a bustling port, where you can catch a more comfortable cruise into Peru's largest national park, **Reserva Nacional Pacaya-Samiria** (p493), via **Lagunas** (p492). It's also tempting to float over into Brazil via the unique **tri-border zone** (p506).

Expect to fly if your time is limited, or spend weeks on epic river and road journeys through the unforgettable Amazon Basin, populated by spectacular wildlife and tribal peoples. Bring bucket loads of patience and self-reliance – and a lot of luck never hurts.





## TAILORED TRIPS

### ANCIENT TREASURES

Peru's main attractions are the Inca ruins at **Machu Picchu** (p267) and the **Sacred Valley** (p258). Near Puno, the funerary towers of the Colla, Lupaca and Inca cultures can be found at **Sillustani** and **Cutimbo** (p206), near Lake Titicaca.

Trujillo is an excellent base for seeing **Chan Chan** (p349), as well as ongoing excavations of the Moche temple mounds of **Huacas del Sol y de la Luna** (p351). If you have time in Huaraz, the 3000-year-old ruins and on-site museum at **Chavín de Huántar** (p422) are worth a trip. Or keep going north to **Chiclayo** (p358), another treasure-house of ancient sites. Nearby, gold and other riches from the excavated site of **Sipán** (p364) are found in the museum at **Lambayeque** (p365). Chiclayo is also the springboard for side trips into the northern highlands, where archaeological sites lie hidden in the cloud forest outside **Chachapoyas** (p441) – such as **Kuélap** (p448), a monolithic monument that gives Machu Picchu a run for its money – and it's blissfully crowd free.

The wonderfully woven artifacts of the Paracas are best seen in museums – Lima's **Museo de la Nación** (p94) and the **Museo Larco** (p95) in particular. To the south, the **Nazca Lines** (p142) can only be appreciated properly from the air. Lima is also a convenient base for a quick jaunt to **Caral** (p338), where you'll see the remnants of America's oldest civilization.



Start in **Lima** (p109), home to hole-in-the-wall joints serving succulent ceviches (seafood marinated in lime juice), as well as trendy *novoandina* (Peruvian nouvelle cuisine) spots. Fill your belly with *picantes* (spicy stews) in **Arequipa** (p182). To the interior, warm up with a cup of steaming *api* (a sweet corn drink) in **Puno** (p204) and subsist on highland staples such as seared *cuy* (guinea pig) and *choclo con queso* (white Andean corn with cheese) in **Cuzco** (p246). **Huancayo** (p311), in the central highlands, is the

home of *papas a la huancaína* (potatoes with a creamy cheese sauce), as well as mouth-watering *trucha* (river trout).

To the north, you can slurp *chupes* (seafood chowders) in **Trujillo** (p347) and gobble up manta-ray omelets and duck stewed in cilantro in **Chiclayo** (p361) – till the seams of your pants groan. **Cajamarca** (p436), to the interior, is another fine spot to eat *cuy*. While in the Amazon cities of **Iquitos** (p494) and **Puerto Maldonado** (p460), never pass up an opportunity to feast on *juanes* – banana leaves stuffed with chicken or pork and rice.



# The Authors



## CAROLINA A MIRANDA

**Coordinating Author, Lima**

Born of a Peruvian father from Chiclayo (an area – FYI – that has a reputation for producing very fierce people), Carolina has spent her life making regular sojourns to Peru to kiss her aunts, wrestle her cousins and eat as much ceviche as is humanly possible. When not experimenting with pisco sour ratios (three parts pisco, one part lime juice, simple syrup to taste), she makes her living as a freelance writer in New York City. She has contributed stories to *Time*, *Budget Travel*, *Travel + Leisure* and public radio station WNYC – and is the author of the uncouth and saucy arts blog *C-Monster.net*.



## AIMÉE DOWL

**North Coast, Huaraz & the Cordilleras, Northern Highlands**

Whether spotting condors in the *páramo* (high-altitude Andean grasslands) or chasing hummingbirds in the cloud forest, prancing around glaciers or trekking up jungle volcanoes, Aimée feels right at home in the high altitudes and ancient cultures of the Andes. Holding no hard feelings toward destinations at sea level, however, she also finds that the Peruvian Amazon is one her favorite places on earth. Aimée lives at a cool 2850m in Quito, Ecuador, where she is a freelance travel and culture writer, and has worked as a secondary educator. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Viajes*, *Ms. magazine*, *BBC History* and four Lonely Planet books.



## KATY SHORTHOUSE

**Lake Titicaca, Cuzco & the Sacred Valley**

Katy's career highlights include walking the Inca Trail 13 times and Australia's Overland Track seven times, guiding multisport tours in Ecuador and Patagonia, and running an adventure business in New Zealand. Lowlights include writing junk mail, telemarketing and cleaning toilets. Katy aspires to travel but she keeps stopping and putting down roots, with the result that she now divides her time between Peru, New Zealand and Australia (and lives in dread of finding somewhere else she likes). If you know of a place that combines Melbourne's culture, Cuzco's food and fiestas, and the multisport hills of Queenstown, please let her know via [www.aspiringadventures.com](http://www.aspiringadventures.com) or drop in to her bar in Cuzco, La Chupitería.

### LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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**LUKE WATERSON****Central Highlands, Amazon Basin**

Raised in the remote Somerset countryside in southwest England, Luke quickly became addicted to exploring out-of-the-way places. Having completed a creative-writing degree at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, he shouldered his backpack and vowed to see as much of the world as was humanly possible. He has spent almost two years backpacking South America and writes for various publications including the *Guardian*. When not wolfing down a plate of *lomo saltado* (strips of beef stir-fried with onions, tomatoes, potatoes and chili) or hiking through the Andes, he can be found living on a rather smaller hill outside London, concocting further travel plans.

**BETH WILLIAMS****South Coast, Arequipa & Canyon Country**

While earning a degree in Latin American studies, Beth spent summers traveling and serving pisco sours at a Peruvian restaurant in her hometown of Portland, Oregon, in the USA. She then followed an interest in women's health to a village nestled at 3000m in the Peruvian Andes. There she spent a year building 'vertical' birthing facilities for Quechua women to give birth in the traditional fashion – standing up. Beth then retreated to sea level to work for a Peruvian nonprofit in the slums of Lima, during which time she added four stamps to her passport and traveled the Peruvian Pan-American Hwy at least five times. What's next? A master's at New York's Columbia University.

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**Dr David Goldberg MD** wrote the Health chapter. David completed his training in internal medicine and infectious diseases at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City, where he has also served as voluntary faculty. At present he is an infectious-diseases specialist in Scarsdale, New York State, and the editor-in-chief of the website [MDTravelHealth.com](http://MDTravelHealth.com).

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