



Peru

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Best Places to Eat

- » Central (p810)
- » Taita (p883)
- » Picantería restaurants, Arequipa (p831)
- » La Quinta Eulalia (p848)
- » Frio y Fuego (p899)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hacienda Concepción (p893)
- » Loki del Mar (p877)
- » Pachamama (p835)
- » Ecopackers (p847)
- » Backpacker's Family House (p807)

Why Go?

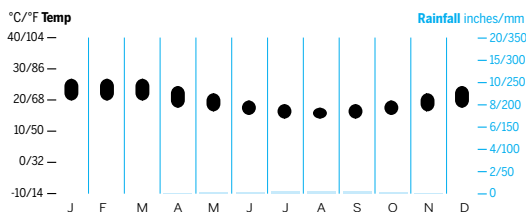
Welcome to a land of extreme and intrigue. Peru's terrain ranges from glaciated Andean peaks and sprawling coastal deserts, to the steamy rainforests of the Amazon Basin. Excavate the past – with temples entangled in jungle vines, windswept desert tombs and shamanic rituals still used today – to find your own lost-world adventure.

You can take the standard route chasing perfect waves off a sunny Pacific beach and ending at the cloud-topping Inca citadel of Machu Picchu. Or step off the beaten path and groove to Afro-Peruvian beats, explore remote ruins in the north or ride a slow boat down the Amazon. Wildlife, from soaring Andean condor to tapir marauding through the tropical forest, provides one more connection to the elemental.

Wherever your journey takes you, you'll find Peruvians' complex culture holds a deep lust for life. Small wonder, then, that the land of the Incas is one of the continent's top picks for adventurous travelers.

When to Go

Lima



Dec–Mar The hottest, blue-sky months ideal for surf and sun on the coast.

Jun–Aug Dry season ideal for hiking the Andean highlands and eastern rainforest.

Sep–Nov & Mar–May Decent travel weather and fewer tourists.

Connections

Border crossings include Arica (Chile) via Tacna; Huaquillas, Guayaquil and Macará (Ecuador), reached from the northern coast and highlands; Kasani and Desaguadero (Bolivia) along Lake Titicaca; and multiple Brazilian and Bolivian towns and river ports in the Amazon.

ITINERARIES

Two Weeks

Start by exploring Lima's great food scene, nightlife and museums. Journey south by boat to the wildlife-rich Islas Ballestas. Then it's on to the sandboarding oasis of Huacachina. Fly over the mysterious Nazca Lines, then turn inland to Arequipa to trek the incredible Cañón del Colca or Cañón del Cotahuasi. Climb to Puno. From here you can boat to Lake Titicaca's traditional islands. Go on to Cuzco, with history, ruins and the colorful markets of the Sacred Valley. Finish by trekking to Machu Picchu via an adventurous alternative route.

Four Weeks

Follow the two-week itinerary. From Cuzco, brave the 10-hour bus ride to Puerto Maldonado to kick back at a riverside Amazon Basin wildlife lodge. Alternatively, overland tours from Cuzco visit the Manu area; with animals from the kinkajou to caiman, it's one of the planet's most biodiverse regions. Back in Lima, head to Huaraz and trek around the Cordillera Blanca's precipitous peaks. Then bus up the coast to historic Trujillo and hit the ruins of the largest pre-Columbian city in the Americas, Chan Chan, and Huacas del Sol y de la Luna. Wrap up with a seaside break at the bustling surf town of Máncora.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Aji de gallina** Shredded-chicken and walnut stew
- » **Anticuchos** Beef-heart skewers, usually grilled as a snack
- » **Buttifara** Ham sandwiches served on French bread
- » **Causa** Mashed-potato terrines stuffed with seafood, vegetables or chicken
- » **Criollo cooking** A blend of Spanish, Andean, Chinese and African influences
- » **Cuy al horno** Roasted guinea pig
- » **Lomo saltado** Steak stir-fried with onions, tomatoes and potatoes, served with rice
- » **Novoandina** Haute cuisine devised with traditional Andean ingredients
- » **Rocoto relleno** Whole pepper stuffed with ground meat
- » **Pisco sour** Peru's national drink is a tart grape brandy mixed with lime, sugar, egg white and bitters

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Nuevo sol (S)
- » **Languages** Spanish, Quechua, Aymara
- » **Money** ATMs widely available, except in small villages
- » **Visas** Generally not needed for tourism (see p913)
- » **Time** GMT minus five hours

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 1,285,220 sq km
- » **Population** 29.5 million
- » **Capital** Lima
- » **Emergency** ☎105
- » **Country code** ☎51

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	S2.57
Canada	C\$1	S2.72
Euro zone	€1	S4.27
New Zealand	NZ\$1	S2.13
UK	UK£1	S4.64
USA	US\$1	S2.90

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** S85
- » **Set lunch** S9
- » **Pisco sour** S8
- » **Eight-hour bus ride** S34-98

Resources

- » **Peru Official Tourism Website** (www.peru.info)
- » **Living In Peru** (www.livinginperu.com)
- » **Peru Links** (www.perulinks.com)
- » **South American Explorers** (www.saexplorers.org)