INSIGHT GUIDES

PERU



CONTENTS

Introduction

The Best of Peru 6
Ancient and Modern 19
Land of Extremes 21

History & Features

Decisive Dates 26
Lost empires: Peru before the Incas 31
The Incas 39
The Conquest 47
Looking for the past 57
From Colony to Republic 59
The covered ones 67
Democracy, Crises, and Resurgence 69
A Changing Society 79
Daily Life in the Andes 87
Peoples of the Amazon 91
How Crafts Have Adapted 97
Pottery culture 101
Music and Dance 103
Festivals and Fusion 108
Fusion of Flavors 111
Andean Adventures 117
Running the Andes 125
Wildlife of the Sierra 127

Places

Introduction 139
LIMA 145
Oasis of hope 156
THE NORTH COAST 161
Witch doctor and wellness 168
Buried Treasures 172
NORTHERN SIERRA 175
Huallaga, Valley of Coca 178
CALLEJÓN DE HUAYLAS 185
Cordillera Huayhuash 192
CENTRAL SIERRA 197
THE NORTHERN AMAZON 207
The Amazon by riverboat 214
MANU TO MALDONADO 219
Jungle lodges 220
Birds of the Amazon 224
THE SOUTH COAST 227
AREQUIPA 243

Colonial Art and Architecture 252
CUSCO 255
THE SACRED VALLEY 269
MACHU PICCHU 277
LAKE TITICACA 289
Taquile Island 298

Travel Tips

TRANSPORTATION

Getting there 302
Getting around 303

A – Z

Accommodations 306
Addresses 306
Admission charges 306
Budgeting for your trip 306
Business travelers 306
Children 306
Climate 307
Crime and security 307
Customs regulations 308
Disabled travelers 308
Electricity 308
Embassies and consulates 308
Etiquette 309
Health and medical care 309
Internet 310
LGBTQ travel 310
Maps 310
Media 310
Money 310
Opening hours 312
Photography 312
Postal services 312
Public holidays 313
Religious services 313
Shopping 313
Student travelers 313
Telephones 313
Time zones 314
Toilets 314
Tourist information 314
Visas and passports 314
Weights and measures 314
Women travelers 314

LANGUAGE

Language 315
Pronunciation 315
Basics 315
Greetings 315
Telephone calls 316
Finding your way 316
In the hotel 316
In the restaurant 317
Menu decoder 317
Shopping 318
Tourist attractions 318
Airport/travel agency 318
Transportation 319
Driving 319
Road signs 319
Emergencies 320
Health 320
Months of the year 320
Seasons 320
Time 320

FURTHER READING

General 321
History 321
Amazon Jungle 322
Other Insight Guides 322

Maps

Peru 140
Lima 142
North Coast 162
Trujillo 164
Northern Sierra 176
Callejón de Huaylas 186
Ayacucho 199
Central Sierra 200
Northern Amazon 208
Manu to Maldonado 222
South Coast 230
Arequipa 245
Around Arequipa 247
Cusco 256
The Sacred Valley 270
Machu Picchu 282
Lake Titicaca 290
Inside front cover Peru
Inside back cover Lima

LEGEND

Insight on
Photo Story

THE BEST OF PERU: TOP ATTRACTIONS



△ **Colca Canyon.** Twice as deep as the Grand Canyon, Peru's Colca Canyon is one of the world's great natural wonders. From the Mirador del Condor, Andean condors can be seen gliding on the air currents high above the valley floor. See page 249.

▽ **Machu Picchu.** This ancient city lay hidden under jungle for centuries. Perched on a hilltop high in the Andes, it is an architectural marvel. See page 277.





△ **North Coast.** Home to Peru's best beaches, including Máncora, Punta Sal, Playa La Pena, and Huanchaco, famous for its *totora* reed boats. See page 161.

▽ **Cusco.** Known to the Incas as "the navel of the earth," the high-altitude city of Cusco is where you'll find some of colonial Peru's most impressive buildings, built directly on top of stones laid by the Incas. See page 255.





△ **Monasterio de Santa Catalina.** Cut off from the outside world until 1970, this is an oasis of calm amidst the hustle and bustle of Arequipa's busy streets. See page 246.

▽ **Nazca lines.** Giant etchings of animals and geometric figures created many thousands of years ago, the lines are one of the world's greatest archeological mysteries. See page 236.





△ **Uros Islands.** The incredible floating islands of Uros on Lake Titicaca date back to pre-Inca times and are made of *totora* reeds, which must be continually replaced as they rot away. See page 293.



△ **Cordillera Blanca.** The Cordillera Blanca mountain range offers some of the best trekking in South America. See page 185.



△ **Plaza Mayor, Lima.** Lima's main square lies at the heart of the "City of Kings" founded by Francisco Pizarro in 1535. It is overlooked by the Cathedral, the Archbishop's Palace, and the Government Palace. See page 149.



▷ **Cameloids.** Peru is home to four types of cameloid: llamas, alpacas, guanacos, and vicuñas. See page 127.

THE BEST OF PERU: EDITOR'S CHOICE



A canopy walkway above the Peruvian Amazon.

BEST NATURAL WONDERS

The rainforest. Covering some 50 million hectares (125 million acres), home to some of the greatest biodiversity on the planet, and storehouse of traditional medicine. See page 207.

The Andes. The highest mountain range outside the Himalayas, with some peaks eternally covered in snow. See page 117.

The volcanoes. Near Arequipa, many are over 6,000-meters (19,000ft) high, their craters filled with boiling mud. See page 243.

The northern beaches. The northern beaches of Punta Sal, Máncora, and around Tumbes: sparkling clear water, white sands, and palm trees. See page 170.

Lake Titicaca. The highest navigable lake in the world. See page 289.

The Coastal Desert. The world's highest dunes and a stark coastline for adventure sports and to view Andean and ocean wildlife. See page 227.

The Cotahuasi Canyon. Like Colca but more remote, one of the deepest river canyons in the world. See page 250.

Hot springs. The Baños del Inca in Cajamarca and the hot springs at Chivay. See pages 180 and 249.



Girl from the highlands.

BEST ADVENTURE TOURISM

Trekking. The Cordillera Blanca and the Cordillera Huayhuash, near Huaraz, offer some of the best trekking in South America.

The Inca Trail. The hard – and scenic – way to reach Machu Picchu.

Climbing. Peru is home to some of the highest mountains in the world, such as Huascarán, at 6,760 meters (22,200ft).

Whitewater rafting. Rapids and beautiful stretches of river can be found on the Urubamba and Apurímac near Cusco.

Mountain biking. Classic biking destinations include the Cordillera Negra, the ranges near Cusco, or the trails of the Colca and Cotahuasi canyons near Arequipa.

Kayaking. Paddling the clear waters of Lake Titicaca and visiting its unique islands is an unmissable experience.

Surfing. The Pacific Ocean offers some of the best surf breaks in the world.

See Andean Adventures, page 117, for details of adventure sports in Peru.

Royal Guardsman.



BEST NATIONAL PARKS



Macaws in Manu National Park.

Parque Nacional del Manu. Covering 1,716,295 hectares (4,290,738 acres) of rainforest, this is the largest national park in Peru and one of the largest on the planet. It is home to 800 species of bird, 200 types of mammal, and seven distinct indigenous tribes. See page 219.

Parque Nacional Huascarán. Around 340,000 hectares (850,000 acres) protect some of Peru's best high-altitude environments. See page 190.

Reserva Nacional Pacaya-Samiria. Two million hectares of lakes, rivers, and semi-submerged rainforest, territory of the rare manatee, pink dolphins, and giant anacondas. See page 215.

Parque Nacional Cordillera Azul. Protects the northern cloud forests between the Andes and the lowland rainforest. Little visited, home to indigenous communities. New species of birds are continuously discovered here. See page 179.

BEST FESTIVALS

La Virgen de La Candelaria. In early February in Puno, thousands of people in traditional dress participate in dances, songs, parades, folkloric plays, and fireworks to celebrate the city's patron saint. See page 291.

Inti Raymi. The Festival of the Sun. This yearly occasion on June 24 in Cusco is perhaps the biggest and most colorful festival in Peru, and celebrates the return of the sun after the winter solstice. See page 264.

Carnival. Celebrated throughout Peru in mid-February, most wildly in Cajamarca. See page 177.

Semana Santa. This festival in March or April is marked with solemn religious processions in the streets. One of the best is in Ayacucho. See page 198.

Independence Day. Celebrated on July 28 and 29 throughout the country. See page 108.

El Señor de los Milagros. Held on October 18, 19, and 28 in Lima, a huge procession in honor of the city's patron saint. See page 153.



La Virgen de la Candelaria festival in Puno.

BEST FOR FAMILIES

Train to Machu Picchu. The passenger train from Cusco is a spectacular way to travel to Machu, especially for kids who are too young to walk the Inca Trail. See page 281.

Islas Ballestas. Take a boat out to the Islas Ballestas, Peru's answer to the Galápagos, to see penguins, sea lions, seals, and pelicans. See page 231.

Parque de las Leyendas. Lima's zoo in Pueblo Libre offers a great way to learn more about Peru's wildlife and is divided into coast, mountain, and jungle zones. It also has a children's playground. See page 155.

Circuito Mágico del Agua. Located in Lima's Parque de la Reserva, the Magic Water Circuit is composed of 13 fountains, with the largest shooting water to a height of 80 meters (262ft). Night-time light, sound, and water shows are amazing. See page 293.



Marinera dancer.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

Pisco. Peru's national drink is a powerful type of brandy. Pisco sour is the national cocktail, made with pisco, lemon juice, sugar syrup, and egg white.

Ceviche. Raw fish and mixed seafood marinated in lemon juice, garlic, and spices.

Anticuchos de corazón. Marinated beef-heart kebabs.

***Humitas* and *tamales*.** Cornmeal dumplings cooked in corn or banana leaves, sometimes with a savory filling.

Pachamanca. An Andean specialty of spiced meat, potatoes, and corn, cooked in the ground on hot rocks.

Pollo a la brasa. Roast chicken is one of Peru's favorite meals and lip-smackingly good.

Potatoes. Peru has some 400 varieties of potatoes, or *papas*. They are the key ingredient for numerous dishes, including the delicious *papa a la huancaína*, a creamy dish with eggs.

Ají. A hot, spicy sauce made with chilis and garlic to accompany meals.

Chicha morada. A sweet, deep-purple non-alcoholic drink made from corn which is surprisingly refreshing.

Cuy. Although not to everyone's taste, roasted or fried guinea pig is a Peruvian specialty.

See Fusion of Flavors, page 111, for more on Peru's food and drink.

Peruvian spirit.





Traditional Peruvian hats made from llama wool.

BEST CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

The Island of Amantaní. On this island in Lake Titicaca, visitors can stay as guests in villagers' homes and share the meals they prepare. See page 294.

Ayacucho during Holy Week. As Peruvian festivals go, these *Semana Santa* celebrations are the ones to outdo all the rest. See page 198.

Handicraft shopping. Shop in one of Peru's many craft markets, such as Pisac near Cusco. See page 313.

Visiting a market. Food markets are found in larger towns and offer an impressive range of Peruvian produce, including unusual fruits and vegetables. See page 272.

Session with a shaman. Learn about your future or drink the powerful Ayahuasca in Chiclayo or the Amazon. See page 168.

Trekking with llamas. Walks organized by villagers from the Callejón de Huaylas that use llamas as pack animals. See page 194.

Moche statue.



BEST HISTORICAL SITES

Chavín de Huantar. Intricate carvings highlight this mysterious Andean cultural site, the greatest of the Cordillera Blanca. See page 191.

Kuélap. Little-visited ruined citadel in Peru's north, spectacular enough to rival Machu Picchu. See page 181.

Chan Chan. The ancient ruins of the Moche civilization, and the largest adobe city in pre-Columbian America. See page 166.

Caral. A circular court and pyramids in the desert reveal an ancient city. See page 161.

Cajamarca. This lovely colonial city is a relief after the crowds of Cusco. See page 175.

Huaca Pucllana. This well-preserved pre-Inca site in Miraflores, Lima, dates back to AD 400 and was the administrative center of the Lima culture. See page 158.

Huacas del Sol y de la Luna. Ancient temples just outside Trujillo were built over several generations of the Moche people and were once covered with brightly colored murals. See page 166.

Visiting the Huaca Pucllana in Lima.





Isla Amantaní on Lake Titicaca.

BEST MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Museo de los Santuarios Andinos. In Arequipa, exhibits include a fascinating display on Inca human sacrifice, and a mummified body of one of the victims. See page 248.

Qoricancha. Now the Iglesia Santo Domingo, the Qoricancha or Temple of the Sun in Cusco was the Incas' most sacred building. See page 261.

Monasterio de San Francisco. In Lima, with its religious art and amazing skull-filled catacombs. See page 151.

Museo de Arte Precolombino. A wonderful collection of textiles, pottery, and gold in Cusco. See page 265.

Tumbas Reales. This world-class museum in Lambayeque contains gold treasures from the Tomb of Lord Sipán. See page 169.

TRAVELER'S TIPS

Go with the flow

Don't expect everything to go to plan. Things change with astounding frequency in Peru. Be flexible, and don't get angry when your plans need to be altered.

Keep your change

Always carry toilet paper, bottled water, and small change in Peru. Outside the biggest tourist spots, you can rarely pay small amounts with large-denomination notes.

Make friends

You might well have been warned to be careful, but don't let this stop you enjoying people's generosity and kindness. Peruvians are an endlessly friendly and hospitable people, and are always keen to communicate and make friends with visitors.

Travel light

Arrive with your suitcase half empty: you can buy almost anything you need here, and clothes are stylish and cheap.

¿Habla español?

Even if you aren't a linguist, be sure to learn a few phrases in Spanish. The effort will be appreciated and will make for a more fulfilling trip.