

# Peru Fact File



## PERUVIAN EMBASSY IN UK

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## BRITISH EMBASSY IN PERU

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Office Hours (GMT): Monday to Thursday 08.00 - 13.00 / 14.00 - 17.00  
(In the afternoon only with an appointment)  
Friday 08.00 - 13.00

## AREA

1,285,216 square kms

## POPULATION

28 million

## CAPITAL

Lima

## LANGUAGE

Spanish (official) Quechua (widely spoken in the Andes)

## TIPPING

Most restaurants add a 10% tip (service charge), however, some do not. The total tip should be about 15%.

## BANKS

### Lima

Monday - Friday 09.00 - 17.30 and Saturdays 09.00 - 13.00

### Cusco

Banco de Credito Monday - Friday 10.00 - 18.00 and Saturdays 09.30 - 12.30

Banco Continental Mon - Fri 09.15 - 12.15 and 16.00 - 18.00 and Sat 09.30 - 12.30

Banco Wiese Monday - Friday 09.00 - 13.30 and 16.00 - 18.30 and Sat 09.30 - 12.30

Banco Interbank Monday - Friday 09.00 - 18.15 and Saturdays 09.15 - 12.30

## POST OFFICES OFFICES

Monday-Saturday 09.00 - 19.00 and Sunday 09.00 - 13.00

## SHOPS

Monday-Friday 09.00 - 17.30 and Saturdays 09.00 - 13.00

## TIME

Monday-Friday 09.00 - 19.00 and Saturdays 09.00 - 19.00

## ELECTRICITY

Peru time coincides with Western standard time in US and is 5 hours behind GMT.

## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

AC 220 volts, 60 cycles (two pin round or flat)

Jan 1 - New Year, May 1 - Labour Day, Jul 28 & 29 - Independence Day, Aug 30 - Saint Rose of Lima, Oct 8 - Battle of Angamos, Nov 1 - All Saints Day, Dec 8 - Immaculate Conception, Dec 24 - Christmas Eve, Dec 25 - Christmas Day

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Camera equipment is expensive in Peru, so you should bring everything you need. The following areas are off limits to all photographers; mines, civilian airports, railroad stations, military barracks, military instruction centres, naval bases, air bases, police station, water and energy plants, oil wells and petroleum refineries. When in doubt, you are advised to ask permission first. Batteries and film are readily available in Lima, Cusco and Aguas Calientes, but may have been stored in hot and humid conditions, and may be out of date. You should make sure you take plenty of film, and a spare set of batteries with you.

## TELEPHONE

The International Prefix for Peru is 0051. When in Peru, dial 01 when calling from outside Lima. Please check with your mobile phone provider if your network & contract enable you to have coverage in Peru. Charity Challenge also has an emergency Satellite Phone available on all expeditions at a cost of £3 per minute.

## CURRENCY

Peru now uses the Sol as its currency. As of April 2005, £1 was worth 6.13 Soles. USD\$ are more widely used, £1 is worth US\$1.88 and USD \$ 1.00 is worth 3.26 nuevos soles. Torn USD are not accepted. Be aware of fraudsters and counterfeit notes. Western Union is represented in Peru, with bureaux in all main cities. This is a quick, reliable way of receiving money from abroad. **You should be alert to the possibility of being passed counterfeit USD or local currency. In April 2005 counterfeit US\$100 notes penetrated the local banking system.**

## CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards & traveller's cheques are welcomed in Lima and Cusco (Visa, MasterCard, Diners and American Express), but take cash for small towns or pueblos. Your will find ATMs in both Lima and Cusco. Most of them are located in airports or near banks. Major credit cards are accepted in most hotels, shops and restaurants. ATM machines can be found in the main cities. Not all shops, restaurants, bars and hotels accept credit cards and it is worth checking whether they do before purchasing or ordering anything.

## TRAVELLERS CHEQUES

## PASSPORTS / VISAS

Cusco has ample opportunity to change traveller's cheques to both dollars and Nuevo Sols. These are exchanged at a lower rate than cash. Sterling is less easy to change. Bring enough funds with you. US Dollars are used alongside local currency. Dollar traveller's cheques can easily be changed.

When entering Peru, participants will be asked to fill out a white embarkation card. This piece of paper is very important. You cannot leave the country without a copy however if you do happen to lose it you are able to buy another for 14 Nuevo Soles on departure. Ensure your entry stamp is legible as it is required by hotels for the exoneration of Peruvian tax. You must hold a full ten-year passport with at least six months to run from the end of your expedition, and at least one blank page for your visa and entry/exit stamps. Please carry 3 photocopies of the passport, and give one copy to the tour leader on arrival. Also see Travel Tips.

## GIFTS AND SHOPPING

Cusco's shops and markets offer a representative sample of Peruvian crafts. The markets are usually less expensive, but there is no quality guaranteed as there is with the shops, so check for defects. You may have the chance to visit Pisac Sunday market, which offers a wide selection of arts and crafts. Store hours are from approx. 10.00 - 20.00, Monday-Saturday. Outside of Lima, street vendors can be found every day of the week in designated areas usually around the main squares aside from regular stores. Almost all shops are closed on Sundays. Always agree on prices in advance of services, e.g. taxis, food in the market etc.

2 litres of alcohol and 400 cigarettes into Peru duty free. Only US\$200 worth of gifts are allowed.

## DUTY FREE VACCINATIONS AND HEALTH

As of Feb 2005 Travellers Stores Medical Centre recommended the following vaccinations: Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhoid and Hepatitis A. They also suggest taking advice from your GP about: Diphtheria; Tuberculosis; Rabies; Hepatitis B and Cholera. Malaria precautions are essential only in low-lying rural areas; the risk is minimal on the Inca trail. Avoid mosquito bites by covering up with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers especially after sunset, using insect repellents on exposed skin and, when necessary, sleeping under a mosquito net. Check with your doctor or nurse about suitable antimalarial tablets. Travellers with heart conditions or high blood pressure should check with their doctors before travelling to high altitude. Also see Health notes.

## RISKS

Crime is a serious problem for foreign visitors in Lima and Cusco. Great care is needed in both places. Tourists in Lima and Cusco should be particularly vigilant when leaving bars and nightclubs late at night. You should remain vigilant at all times and avoid walking alone. Travelling alone to areas outside Cusco at night is not recommended.

Be careful when buying medication - the expiry date may have passed or correct storage conditions may not have been followed. Bogus drugs are common and it's possible that drugs, which are no longer recommended elsewhere, are still being dispensed in parts of South America.

Peru is an earthquake zone. Minor tremors can happen in Lima, Arequipa, Cusco and other main tourist areas without warning.

In an emergency you should contact the:

Tourist Police (Policia de Turismo)

LIMA: Tambo de Belén 106, Cercado de Lima (It's located by Jiron de la Union, block 10<sup>th</sup>) - Phone: (01) 424-2053

CUSCO: Calle Saphi 510 - (located by Saphi Police Station) - Phone: (084) 249654

## HOSPITALS / PHARMACIES WATER

Most major hotels have a doctor on call. There are also hospitals with 24-hours emergency services. We have a doctor along on your trip and the leader has information on the local clinics to be used.

It is not recommended to drink tap water. We strongly recommend you bring two canteens with you for the trip. We will provide boiled water during the trek but additional purification through iodine drops or purification tablets are also an option. You can also buy bottled water almost throughout the expedition, but there are currently no recycling plants and literally thousands of plastic bottles are ending up being buried in Cusco. Although helping to drive the economy through the bottled water sales, this is causing a large environmental issue. The choice is yours. Do not use tap water when cleaning your teeth. Also see Health notes and Responsible Tourism notes.

## CLIMATE

Peru's climate has two seasons - wet and dry - though the weather varies depending on the geographical region. In the Andes there is a dry season (April to October) and a wet season (December to March).

## TEMPERATURE

The average temperature throughout the year goes from 8.5°C/47.3°F (June to August) to 10.8°C/51.4°F (September to May). In the Andes the temperature can drop up to 15° from day to nighttime, especially at higher altitudes during the trek.

## GEOGRAPHY

Peru is located over the Central and Occidental area of South America. Its borders are with Ecuador and Colombia to the north, Chile to the South, Brazil and Bolivia to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west.

## CULTURE / CUSTOMS

Generally speaking, Peruvians are formal. Hands are shaken on meeting and leaving a person. Buenos dias is a good start. Peruvians are used to less personal space than many Europeans may be used to. If you ask someone if they would like to have a drink or meal with you, you are expected to pay for it.

## DO'S & DON'TS

- Do carry identification documents at all times. Keep separate photocopies of all personal documents like passports in a plastic bag to protect against damage from damp.
- Do pack your luggage yourself and keep it with you at all times. Do not carry items through customs that do not belong to you. It is advisable to padlock your bag when travelling through the airport system.
- Do take care with your belongings; crime is a serious problem in Lima and Cusco for foreigners.
- Do travel on local transport in groups' & only use reputable suppliers. If you experience any problems please contact the Tourist protection Service on +51 1 424 2053.
- Don't whistle to get someone's attention or point with the index finger, it is considered impolite. Close friends might kiss each other on the cheek. Men often embrace if well acquainted.
- Don't get involved with drugs. Drug trafficking is a serious crime in Peru and drug smugglers face severe penalties, usually receiving long terms of imprisonment in extremely difficult conditions.
- Don't take any valuable artefacts from the country without the proper authority. Be aware and vigilant at all times.
- Don't flush toilet paper down the toilet.