



An introduction to Peru

We have put together this guide to introduce Peru to you knowing that is very easy to get bamboozled by too much information. We hope this short guide will be enough to set you on the right course, without being too detailed. As such it is not meant to be definitive - for further details we strongly recommend that you look at our website southamericaodyssey.com/peru or get in touch; we would be delighted to talk you through the options.





Country summary

The central highlands are jaw droppingly beautiful whether you are walking around an ancient Inca fortress, cycling through the sleepy traditional farming communities or relaxing at a world class hotel with view over the snow-capped volcanoes, whatever you are doing you can't help but love it all. In the east is the untamed and biodiverse Amazon Rainforest which offers escapism, unrivalled wildlife viewing and a unique experience of this environment. Lima, the capital city, on the western Pacific has some of the continents best museums and world class restaurants.

Highlights of the county

Lima

Lima is an interesting mix of old history and new development. It's location on the Pacific Coast means picturesque views and opportunities for day trips to nearby islands if time allows. Among the historical intrigue of the city is the Museo Larco which has more than 45,000 Ancient Peruvian pieces including old treasures and mysterious artefacts to goggle at on your stop here. There is much to see in these world class museums, and also lots to eat with some of the world's best restaurants.

We suggest staying in the fitting former colonial mansion Hotel B, a boutique hotel which is a perfect base to explore the city from.

Cuzco, The Sacred Valley & Machu Picchu

Cuzco is a fantastic location for wandering around and soaking in the interesting atmosphere it provides. As the former capital of the Inca Empire, Cuzco is seeping with old history and hidden gems. With its cobbled streets, markets and nearby Inca Ruins it makes for an extremely interesting city.

For a 5 star experience look no further than the Hotel Monasterio - seeping with history it perfectly encapsulates the vibe of the city.

For a more activity based experience a short drive from Cuzco, The Sacred Valley is the place to be. It has everything – culture, colourful markets including Pisac (the best in South America), horse riding, water rafting, mountain biking, trekking and even more historical sites.

For an authentic experience with a picturesque view of the Andean Mountain, we recommend staying at the Explora Sacred Valley or Sol y Luna

Finally, you will not find a more dramatic backdrop than the infamous Machu Picchu – the main reason to visit Peru. It is 120km south of Cuzco, and can be accessed through the popular Inca trail (a 4/5 day trek), or alternatively via train and bus – you can basically decide how long your trip there will take. Whatever your transport mode, this historical mystery is sure not to disappoint and is a serious must see.

For the best exclusive location to stay whilst exploring look at Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge which is at Machu Picchu itself or El Mapi in nearby Aguas Calientes.

The Peruvian Amazon

This area is what you'd expect from the name. Hugely dense with 20,000 different plant species and one of the most biodiverse pockets in the world, the nature and wildlife here is unparalleled. This is a fantastic opportunity to see a different side of Peru, and a nice contrast to the other places you will visit. We recommend that you immerse yourself in this wild environment by staying in the better located but more basic lodges such as Tambopata Research Centre. There is also the more luxurious option of Reserva Amazonica for those looking to enjoy the finer things in life.



More places to visit in Peru

Arequipa, Colca & Lake Titicaca

If you have time to go and see the 'white city' (Arequipa), aptly named for its buildings of white volcanic rock which makes this world heritage site a possible attraction along with its view of El Misti volcano. Colca is another option for the culture keen – it is a canyon surrounded by picturesque towns, with an authentic Peruvian feel as many of the women still dress in traditional clothing. Cola Lodge is a wonderful, charming and lush place to stay as you can enjoy their natural hot springs whilst drinking a cocktail under the stars. Close to the Bolivian border sits Lake Titicaca, a big body of water with fascinating islands dotted around it. It is a great place to go if you are looking for a raw and scenic experience.

Even more places in Peru

Nazca Chiclayo and Trujillo are also options if you are on your trip for the long haul. Please contact us for any more information on the above.

Neighbouring countries to combine with a Peru itinerary

Visiting Peru is also a fantastic opportunity to branch out to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands for nature lovers. Or even Chile for a more diverse experience – visit Patagonia, one of the most beautiful and isolated areas in the world or hit up the lights of Santiago; there really are lots of options. It just depends on what kind of holiday interests you the most.



General information on Peru

When is the best time to visit?

The three main regions of Peru all have their own microclimates, meaning that the best time to visit one area doesn't necessarily make it the best time to visit another. That being said, for most the highlights of Peru are focused around the southern highlands which are best visited between April and September. During these months the weather in the highlands will be dry and sunny during the day and very cool in the evenings due to the altitude. If you want to spend an extended amount of time in Lima then the best months are from December to March.

How much does a trip to Peru cost?

There is no easy answer to this one as all of our itineraries are designed from scratch to suit your interest and budget. As a general guide then a two week trip to Peru staying in mid-range hotels would cost £4,200 per person excluding international flights. For a full itinerary please see <http://digital.africaodyssey.com/Itinerary/Map/b1dd82d3-d2d9-4d9b-8005-600c789ae0c1>

Is the altitude a problem?

Many of the sites in Peru are in high altitude, which can cause altitude sickness. It is not a problem, but just something to be wary of. Even if you are very fit, keep in mind to always stay hydrated and hopefully you will acclimatise quickly. Talk to your GP if you have any medical conditions prior to your trip.

What is the currency?

Peruvian Nuevo Sol is the currency. US dollars can be withdrawn and UK credit/debit cards are accepted at many ATMs. Many money exchange offices exchange US dollars cash (not many accept euros or sterling and the rate may be bad).

What is the language?

Spanish.

What is the time difference?

GMT -5 hours.

How do I get there?

To Lima most flights are around 12.5 hours long. Hop on the direct flight from London Gatwick or other non-direct routes which include changes in Amsterdam, Paris or Madrid.



Why South America Odyssey?

First and foremost, the team here at Odyssey Travel love South America and have spent many years exploring and working in the continent in a variety of capacities. We have stayed at the hotels we work with, we have built loyal relationships with the best guides in their respective fields, and we now use our love and first-hand knowledge to craft individual tailor made itineraries. It is our intimate knowledge of the continent, combined with our relationships that help us continually deliver exceptional and authentic holidays to the continent. Our promise to you is first class service, unrivalled country knowledge and value for money.

✓ First class service ✓ Super knowledgeable itinerary designers ✓ Fantastic value for money

Our price promise

Booking through us will cost no more - and often considerably less - than booking the same trip with all the individual suppliers directly. We are able to negotiate excellent rates with suppliers, which results in savings for you. In the very unlikely event that you get a cheaper quote for the same trip from a reputable UK bonded tour operator, we will match that quote.

We are ATOL bonded (ATOL 5397) so whatever might happen to us, your money is protected.

No surcharge for currency fluctuations Once your itinerary is confirmed and your deposit has been paid, we guarantee that we will make no surcharge for currency fluctuations, whatever happens to exchange rates before you actually travel.

In summary, we are able to package a holiday for less than you will be able to arrange directly, without any exchange risk, and you will benefit from our decades of experience in arranging similar trips, our impartial opinions, and the financial security that our ATOL bond offers!