



choice
TRAVEL

Destination Guide: Peru

What to know before you go

Essential preparation and planning tips

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Who is CHOICE? Set up by consumers for consumers, **CHOICE** is the [consumer advocate](#) that provides Australians with information and advice, free from commercial bias.



THE BEST TIME TO VISIT PERU

Peru is located just south of the equator and has two main seasons: dry and wet. When it comes to most of the country, the best time to travel is in the dry season.

Best time to visit

Dry season: May to October.

Wet season: November to April, with January to April likely to be the wettest.

- The best time to visit the highlands, home to the Andes and the Inca Trail, is during the dry season, between May and October. Daytime temperatures are mild, between 20–25°C, but nights at higher elevations get very cold, particularly between June and July. January and February are very wet and the Inca Trail is closed in February for maintenance, although you can still access [Machu Picchu, the famous Incan citadel](#).

- The Amazon jungle is rainy, hot and humid throughout the year, though better May to October, when temperatures reach 30–38°C during the day. Peru's Amazon jungle area is known for its wildlife, particularly birds and insects. You can also go on tours to see wildlife including jaguars and monkeys. If you're interested in adventure tourism, whitewater rafting and kayaking are popular activities.
- If you're heading for the desert coast, including Lima, the country's capital, summer (December to March) is hot and sunny, with temperatures around 25°C. It's cooler but still humid between April to November, and the coast tends to be shrouded in mist. Swimming is possible throughout the year, but the water is always chilly as a result of the Humbolt Current, and very cold in winter. Consider wearing a wetsuit.

Peak and off-peak seasons

Low season: December to February.

Peak season: June to August.

Shoulder season: September to November and March to May.

Public holidays in Peru

- › January 1 – New Year's Day (*Año Nuevo*)
- › March/April – Maundy Thursday (*Jueves Santo*)
- › March/April – Good Friday (*Viernes Santo*)
- › May 1 – Labour Day (*Día de los Trabajadores*)
- › June 29 – Feast of St Peter and St Paul (*Día de San Pedro y San Pablo*)
- › July 28-29 – Independence Day and Independence Day Holiday (*Día de la Independencia*).
- › August 30 – St Rose of Lima Day (*Día de Santa Rosa de Lima*).
- › October 8 – Battle of Angamos (*Batalla de Angamos*).
- › November 1 – All Saints' Day (*Día de Todos los Santos*)
- › December 8 – Immaculate Conception (*Día de la Purísima Concepción*)
- › December 25 – Christmas Day (*Navidad*)





TRAVELLING TO PERU

Peru's capital city Lima is the gateway to the rest of the country.

Flights from Australia

There are currently no direct flights from Australia to Peru.

- › From Melbourne, you can fly to Lima with a single stopover in Los Angeles in the USA.
- › From Sydney, you can fly to Lima with one stopover via Los Angeles or Dallas in the USA, or via Santiago, Chile.
- › There are more options if you're willing to fly with two or more stopovers.

Flights from other countries

You can fly directly into Lima from:

- › Quito, Ecuador with several direct flights daily taking just over two hours.
- › Santiago, Chile with daily flights that last just under four hours.

- › Buenos Aires, Argentina, with direct flights of just under five hours.
- › Brazil, Sao Paulo (five hours) and Rio de Janeiro (five-and-a-half hours).
- › Bogota, Colombia in around three hours.
- › Caracas, Venezuela in four hours.

Airports in Peru

Lima

The Jorge Chávez International Airport (LIM) in Callao, in the wider Lima metropolitan area, is the main hub for international travel in Peru.

What you need to know about Jorge Chávez International Airport (LIM)

- › The airport is about 40 minutes drive from central Lima, but may take longer during peak times between 7am and 10am and between 5pm and 8pm.

- If you're transiting the airport and want to exit to see some of the city, you'll need to go through migration control and customs. When you return to the airport, you'll need to pay a tax, called the Unified Tariff for Airport Use (also known as the TUUA), which is approximately \$US31 for international flights and \$US11 for domestic flights. If you fly into the airport directly, this tax is included in your ticket price.



- The Airport Lima Express operates a bus service for passengers with free Wi-Fi, USB chargers and no baggage limits. The bus travels between the airport and the hotel district of Miraflores. You can buy tickets at counters located at both the domestic and international arrivals terminals. Find timetables and more information on the [Airport Lima Express website](#).
- You can find a list of licensed taxis and shuttle bus operators on the [LIM website](#). A taxi from the airport to major hotels in Lima will cost about 60 soles (around \$25).
- There are four rental car companies located at LIM: Avis, Budget, Hertz and Grupo ANC. Avis is available only at the international arrivals area of the airport, while Budget and Hertz are located in both the international and domestic arrivals terminals.
- Visit the [Lima airport website](#) for more information.

Cusco

The Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport is the main airport for travellers wishing to visit Cusco and Machu Picchu.

What you need to know about Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport (CUZ)

- Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport is around 15 minutes drive from the centre of Cusco.
- You can find a booth for the official Llama Taxis in the baggage collection area of the airport.
- You can catch a local bus outside the airport from near the Pecsá petrol station into the city centre, but watch out for pickpockets.
- Visit the [Cusco airport website](#) for more information.

Travel by land and water

You can enter Peru via official checkpoints from Ecuador, Bolivia and Chile by bus or car. While it is also possible to cross by land from Colombia, the Australian government advises travellers not to do so because of the threat of drug traffickers and guerrilla forces.

Travelling to Peru from Bolivia by land

There are two main land crossings between Peru and Bolivia: from Copacabana in Bolivia, near Lake Titicaca, to Puno, on the Peruvian side of the lake (the more common route); or between Bolivia's Desaguadero and Puno.

Travelling to Peru from Ecuador by land

Avoid the border areas between Peru and Ecuador in the Loreto, Amazonas (Cordillera del Condor) and Cajamarca regions as they may still contain landmines.

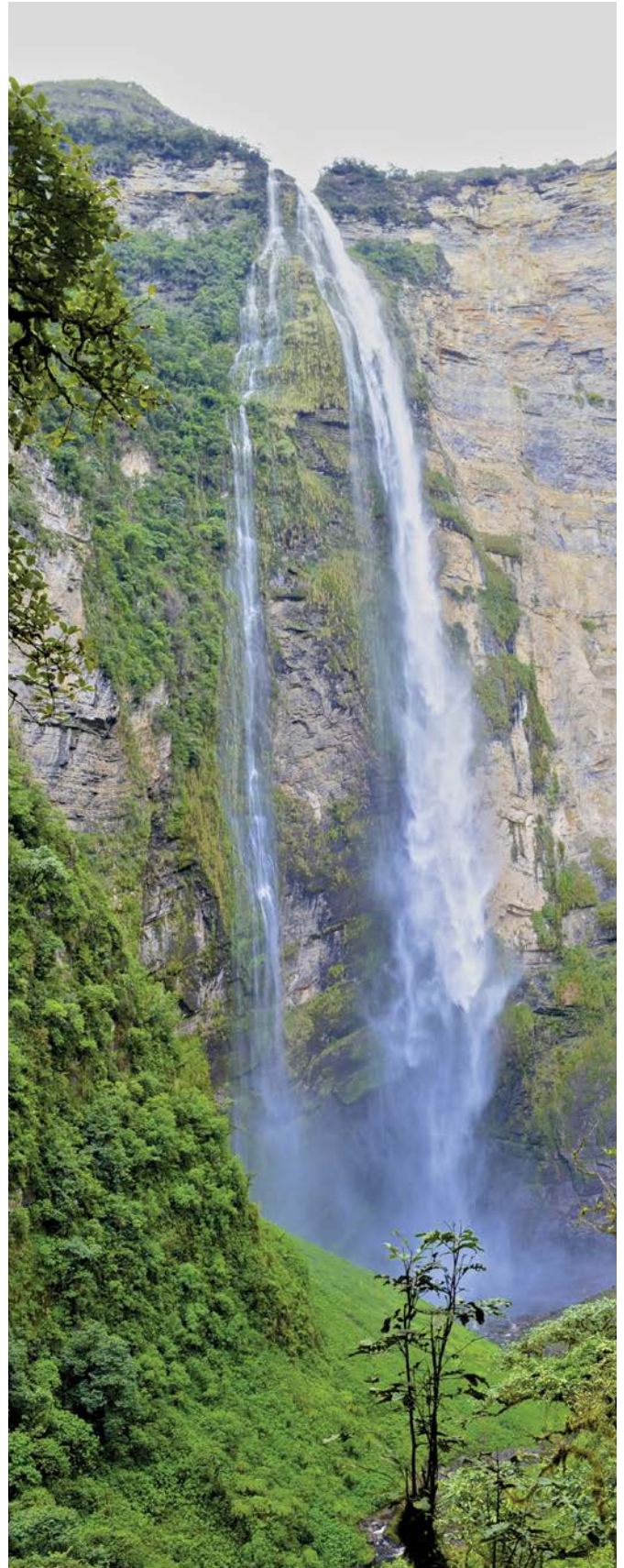
You can cross more safely via three official routes: near the coast on the Aguas Verdes route (Huaquillas, Ecuador to Tumbes, Peru), through the mountains via the La Tina route (Macará, Ecuador to Sullana, Peru), and through the jungle via the La Balsa route (Zumba, Ecuador to San Ignacio, Peru).

Travelling to Peru from Chile by land

You can get across the Chile-Peru border by travelling from Arica, Chile to Tacna, Peru.

Travel by water

The city of Iquitos in Peru's Amazonas region can't be reached by road, but is connected by river to Brazil and Colombia. You can take a speedboat to the tri-border, or take one of the slower boats that take up to a few days to reach your destination. Be careful if you do decide to travel by river though – armed criminals have been known to target boats in the region.





When you're booking a trip to Peru, you'll need to plan ahead to ensure you stay safe and make the most of your cash.

Peruvian currency fast facts

- The currency used in Peru is the sol (S/).
- The sol is subdivided into centimos, worth 1/100 of a sol.
- Bank notes come in the denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 soles. Coins come in denominations of five, 10, 20 and 50 centimos and one, two and five soles.
- Many of the larger hotels, shops and restaurants also accept US dollars. If you're using US dollars, you should be aware of the daily exchange rate, because you may get your change in soles.
- Check xe.com for the latest exchange rates.

ATMs, credit cards and traveller's cheques

- Cash is king in Peru. ATMs are widely available, particularly in cities, and many will allow you to withdraw either soles or US dollars. Always stay vigilant when you're using an ATM on the street; don't use ATMs at night and use only guarded ATMs, particularly those that are inside banks or buildings.
- If you can, try to take money out in small bills, also known as *billetes pequeños*, as getting change in Peru is tricky.
- Watch out for fake US and Peruvian sol banknotes, especially when receiving change from taxi drivers or changing money on the street. To avoid these, it is best to carry small change and withdraw cash from ATMs or convert your money in banks or major hotels.

- › Credit cards, particularly Visa, Diners Club and MasterCard, are accepted in much of Peru, although you may be asked to show your passport to pay with one. You'll need to carry your passport or a notarised copy of the photograph page with you anyway.
- › While traveller's cheques are also an option, you may not be able to cash them in many of the more rural or remote locations in Peru.

Money changers

Getting your hands on Peruvian soles before you leave Australia is very difficult, if not impossible. None of the big four banks allow you to buy soles before you leave, and several of the more well-known travel exchange firms also don't hold the currency.

Once you arrive in Peru, you can change money at *casas de cambio* – currency exchanges – and at banks. You'll need to bring your ID. Banks are likely to charge higher fees, and rates can be better at the *casas de cambio*.

Finding somewhere to exchange your Australian dollars is likely to be challenging, and you're unlikely to get a good rate. Your best bet is to [buy some US dollars](#) before you leave Australia, and swap those into soles once you arrive.

Peru also has its fair share of money-changers, who operate on the street and can be identified by their colourful smocks or jackets with dollar signs on them. It is legal to exchange money this way, but it's not advised, as you may get stuck with counterfeit notes. If you do choose to use a money-changer, check the notes you receive to ensure you're not getting forgeries by holding them up to the light and checking for a watermark. Count the cash when you get it, and never accept ripped, very worn or written on bills, as these will often be rejected by vendors.

Tipping

- › You don't need to tip your taxi driver.
- › Tip hotel or airport porters \$US1.
- › Restaurant bills will generally include a 10% service charge, but if you're eating in a fancier establishment it's customary to add a 5% tip on top of that.

Local vocabulary for money-related queries

- › *Billetes pequeños* means small bills.
- › *Casas de cambio* are currency exchange bureaus.
- › *Diñero* is Spanish for money.
- › *Cuanto cuesta?* means "How much is it?"
- › *Gostaria comprar esto, éste* is "I would like to buy this one".
- › *Es demasiado caro!* means "It's too expensive".

Top tips

- › Tell your bank about your travel before you leave to ensure it doesn't flag your card as stolen while you're using it in Peru.
- › If you're with Westpac or St George, you can withdraw money from Scotiabank ATMs without paying the \$5 ATM fee.
- › Acquaint yourself with [what Peruvian notes and coins look like](#) before you go, so you can try to avoid fake bills.



VISITING THE LAND OF THE INCAS – MACHU PICCHU

Set in the upper Amazon basin among a tropical rainforest on the eastern slopes of the Andes, the Inca citadel of Machu Picchu is an incredible sight and likely Peru's most well-known attraction. But because of its unique location, it can be tricky to get to. Here's what you need to know.

The best time to go to Machu Picchu

While Machu Picchu is open year-round, the Peruvian highlands are best visited during the dry season between May and October, with July and August being the busiest months. January and February are very wet and the Inca Trail is closed in February for maintenance.

Best ways to get to Machu Picchu

Cusco is the gateway to Machu Picchu. From there, you can either choose to hike to the citadel via the Inca Trail, or go directly to Machu Picchu. Read about how to get to Cusco in our [guide to travelling to Peru](#).

How to get from Cusco to Machu Picchu

Via the Inca Trail

The Inca Trail, which takes about four days over

roughly 40km of moderate to demanding trekking, usually starts at Piscacucho, otherwise known as Kilometre 82 (although you can also start at the ruins of Qoriwayrachina), and ends at Machu Picchu.

To hike the trail, you'll need a government permit, which you can get through an official operator approved by the La Dirección Regional de Cultura (DRC) government department. You can't do the trek on your own – you'll have to do it on a guided tour.

Only 500 people (including guides and porters) are allowed to start the Inca Trail per day, so you'll need to book a permit months in advance. You can check how many are left on a particular day by visiting the [Ministry of Culture website](#) (be patient – it can take a while to load).

You can find a list of official tour operators on the [Association of Tourism Agencies of Cusco website](#).

Top tip: The Inca Trail is closed in February.

Via train

You can get from the Poroy station near Cusco to Machu Picchu by taking a train to Aguas Calientes, a town located 9km from the historic site. The train takes around three-and-a-half hours, and you should book ahead as tickets can sell out months in advance during peak season.

Three train companies operate on the route: [Inca Rail](#), [Peru Rail](#), and the [Belmond Hiram Bingham train](#).

Trains also run from the town of Ollantaytambo, around halfway between Cusco and Aguas Calientes. You can travel to Ollantaytambo, which is home to its own Incan ruins, from Cusco by bus or minivan.

From Aguas Calientes, you can reach Machu Picchu by bus in about 25 minutes or walk the 8km to the site up a steep path.

How to get acclimatised

Anyone, even someone who is very fit, can get life-threatening altitude sickness if they climb to altitudes 2500m or higher above sea level. The milder symptoms of altitude sickness include headaches, lethargy, coordination and performance issues, insomnia, lost appetite, dizziness, nausea and vomiting. Severe altitude sickness is very serious, and symptoms can include breathlessness, heart palpitations, a bluish tinge to skin and nails, coughing due to fluid in the lungs, pink or frothy phlegm, irrational behaviour and being unable to walk in a straight line or sit up.

You're more susceptible if you've had altitude sickness before, if you exercise or drink alcohol before acclimatising or if you suffer from health problems that may affect your breathing.

While Machu Picchu itself is slightly below 2500m, to get there, you're likely to have to pass through areas above that level. Cusco is 3399m above sea level, and the highest part of the Inca Trail, Warmiwañusca, sits at 4205m. There have been reports of tourists who have died as a result of altitude sickness en route to the citadel.

The best way to prevent altitude sickness is to ascend slowly, allowing your body to acclimatise. Here's what you need to do:

- Give yourself two to three days to get used to high altitudes before climbing above 3000m.
- Go slowly, and don't travel more than 300m per day above 3000m.



- Give yourself a day to rest every few days or 600 to 900m.
- Drink lots of water (up to seven litres per day).
- Avoid alcohol and cigarettes.
- Don't take sleeping tablets.
- Don't exercise for the first 24 hours after arriving at high altitude.
- Eat a high calorie diet, but avoid heavy foods.
- Consider taking acetazolamide, a medication that may help ameliorate altitude sickness symptoms, a couple of days before reaching high altitudes. But it's no silver bullet, so you should still acclimatise.
- Salmeterol inhalers are sometimes used to prevent fluid from building up in the lungs.
- While locals believe drinking coca tea can relieve altitude sickness and help travellers acclimatise, according to the US Center for Disease Control (CDC), there's no evidence it works.



What to do if you think you have altitude sickness

- People who are suffering from altitude sickness often deny they're affected, so you should have a buddy who can check on you as you ascend.
- If you're feeling unwell, stop climbing for at least 24 hours, rest where you are and don't move higher until your symptoms subside.
- If you don't feel better after 24 hours, you should descend by at least 500m and not ascend again until your symptoms are gone.
- You may like to take painkillers such as paracetamol for headaches and nifedipine and dexamethasone for mild altitude symptoms. But be careful, because these medications may hide early warning signs of a serious problem.
- Diuretic medication may reduce fluid accumulation.
- If it's available, administer oxygen.

Top tip: While travellers tend to stay in Cusco for a couple of days after arriving to acclimatise, the CDC suggests going straight to the Valle Sagrado of the Rio Urubamba (the Sacred Valley), which is located northeast of Cusco at a lower altitude. You can take

a train from Cusco to Aguas Calientes, visit Machu Picchu, then head back to Cusco and spend some time there once you've acclimatised at the lower altitudes.

Machu Picchu tours

As of 1 July 2017, you can only enter Machu Picchu with a licensed tour guide with a group of 16 people or fewer, either during a morning session (from 6am to noon) or during the afternoon (noon to 5:30pm). You'll have to follow pre-defined routes and won't be able to explore independently. If you want a full-day visit, you'll need to book two tickets. The government is trialing the new system for two years.

You can find a list of licensed tour operators on the [Ministry of Culture website](#). Click on the "Agencias" tab on the bottom toolbar on the site. You can also find a guide at the entrance to Machu Picchu. Check for their official photo ID card issued by the National College of Tourism (it's likely to be worn around the neck).

Where to eat

There aren't a lot of options for eating in Machu Picchu itself – you can bring your own lunch and eat it near the entrance to the site (food is banned inside the citadel), or dine at either the Tampu Restaurant or Tinkuy Buffet Restaurant at the Belmond Sanctuary Lodge hotel, or the Snack Bar.



10 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU TRAVEL TO PERU

If you're thinking of heading to Peru, planning ahead with these top 10 things to know will help you get the most out of your holiday.

1. Top safety tips

Be very careful when you're travelling to Peru as the country has a high level of serious crime. These tips should help keep you safe.

- Don't drink the tap water – boil the water or drink bottled instead. You should also avoid ice.
- Violent crimes such as muggings, carjackings, armed robberies and sexual assaults are common in Peru, especially in Lima, Cusco and Arequipa. Avoid walking alone after dark, be aware of your surroundings and try not to carry valuable items with you when you're out and about. This includes keeping a minimal amount of cash on you.
- Exchange money in banks, your hotel or in currency exchange bureaus rather than through street spruikers to avoid being robbed or given counterfeit money.
- Food and drink spiking can occur in Peru, so don't accept items offered to you by strangers or leave anything you plan to eat or drink unattended.
- Petty crimes such as pickpocketing and bag snatching are also common, particularly in crowded areas such as hotels, restaurants and bars. Keep your belongings close at all times and don't leave anything unattended. Be cautious before and after using an ATM.
- Thieves target baggage placed in overhead racks or under seats on buses and trains, particularly on the Lima, Ica, Nazca and Cusco routes. Keep your stuff close and avoid falling asleep or getting distracted.
- So-called express kidnappings, where you might be forced to take money out of an ATM by a crook, have been known to happen in Peru.
- Unlicensed taxis can be dangerous, particularly in Lima, Arequipa and Cusco. Stick to official taxi counters at airports and ask your hotel or restaurant to help you book registered taxis.

- If you hire a car, make sure you store any bags or valuables out of sight, keep the doors locked and windows closed. In Lima near Jorge Chávez International Airport, the intersection on Avenida de la Marina and Avenida Elmer Faucett is a notorious spot for muggings, with criminals known to smash windows and steal stuff from passengers' laps and off back seats.
- Avoid travelling by car outside of major cities after dark, as criminals are known to set up fake roadblocks or checkpoints.
- If you're on a cruise ship in the Amazon region, be aware that armed criminals have been known to assault and rob travellers. You should ask your

tour provider what precautions they take to avoid such incidents before booking a trip.

- Be wary of ayahuasca tourism, in which shamans give travellers a psychedelic brew they claim has medicinal properties. While it isn't against the law, there are security risks involved, as some tourists have reported being assaulted or robbed while under the influence of the brew.

2. Areas of Peru to avoid

Travellers should avoid some parts of Peru altogether due to the risk of serious unrest or violence. Here's where you shouldn't go.

- Don't travel within 20km of the Colombian border, as you may run into drug traffickers and armed guerrilla forces.
- Avoid going within 20km of the Ecuadorian border in the regions of Loreto, Amazonas (Cordillera del Cóndor) and Cajamarca. These areas may still contain hidden landmines. Cross the border into Ecuador at official checkpoints only. You can read more in the [Travelling to Peru guide](#).
- There may still be terrorists from the Shining Path group in isolated areas in the Southern Highlands such as San Martín, Huánuco, Pasco, Junín, Ucayali, Huancavelica, Ayacucho and Apurímac. Avoid these areas if you can, and be vigilant if you intend to visit.

3. Which vaccinations do you need in Peru?

Here are the vaccinations you may need before travelling to Peru.

- Hepatitis A and typhoid vaccinations are advised for all travellers as these diseases are spread through contaminated food and water, regardless of where you are staying.



- If you intend to get a tattoo or piercing, have sex with a new partner, or you may require medical procedures, you should consider getting a hepatitis B vaccination. Hepatitis B is spread through sexual contact, contaminated needles and blood products.
- Travellers who are likely to participate in outdoor adventure activities such as caving, working with animals or travelling to remote areas in Peru should get a rabies vaccine.

Yellow fever

Yellow fever is a mosquito-transmitted viral disease that can cause serious illness and death. To get the jab, you'll need to go to an approved yellow fever vaccination clinic, which will be able to provide you with a special certificate in a form approved by the World Health Organization. You'll be protected after 10 days from the day you get the jab, and it'll last for life.

- You can find a list of yellow fever vaccination clinics on the [Australian Department of Health website](#).
- You'll need a yellow fever vaccination if you're travelling to the following areas at elevations below 2300m: the regions of Amazonas, Loreto, Madre de Dios, San Martin, Ucayali, Puno, Cusco, Junín, Pasco, and Huánuco, and certain areas of the far north of Apurímac, far northern Huancavelica, far north-eastern Ancash, eastern La Libertad, northern and eastern Cajamarca, northern and north-eastern Ayacucho, and eastern Piura.
- You won't need a yellow fever vaccination if you stick to these areas west of the Andes: the regions of Lambayeque and Tumbes, specific parts of western Piura, south, west, and central Cajamarca, all areas above 2300m elevation, Cusco, Lima, Machu Picchu, and the Inca Trail.

- If you have visited Peru within six days of returning to Australia, customs will ask you to show a yellow fever vaccination certificate when you come home. If you don't have one, you'll still be allowed to enter the country.
- Some countries do ban travellers who have been in areas with yellow fever from entering without a yellow fever vaccination certificate. Check with the relevant authorities before you head off – some airlines may bar you from boarding your flight.





Zika virus

Lower altitude areas of Peru are currently experiencing an outbreak of the Zika virus. Women who are pregnant or plan to get pregnant face the greatest risk from Zika, as it can cause children to be born with microcephaly – a seriously underdeveloped head and brain.

Zika is mainly transmitted through mosquito bites (although there have been some cases of the disease being sexually transmitted) so it is rare in areas of Peru above 2000m altitude, where you're unlikely to find mozzies.

To protect yourself from Zika, try to avoid mosquito bites by covering up in light coloured clothing and wearing repellent containing DEET or Picaridin.

Check [Smart Traveller's Zika Bulletin](#) and the World Health Organization's [Zika factsheet](#) for the latest advice, and read CHOICE's article about how the [Zika virus could affect your travel insurance](#).

4. Altitude sickness in Peru

Even if you're very fit, if you climb to altitudes higher than 2500m, which includes areas such as Cusco, Machu Picchu, Puno and the Colca Canyon and Lake Titicaca, you risk getting altitude sickness, which is life-threatening.

While it can affect anyone, you're more likely to get altitude sickness if you've had it before, exercise or drink alcohol before acclimatising to high altitudes or suffer from health problems that may affect your breathing.

If you plan to travel to areas at high altitude, see your doctor before you travel and take your time on the way up. More information about acclimatising is available in our [guide to Machu Picchu](#).

5. Visas and passports

You don't need a visa if you're an Australian travelling to Peru for a holiday of up to six months, but there are some things you should know before you go.

- › Your passport should be valid for at least six months from the day you plan to return to Australia.
- › If you lose your passport, you'll need a new entry stamp. You can get one at the [Superintendencia Nacional de Migraciones](#).
- › Australian/Peruvian dual nationals under 18 years of age (or Peruvian residents) travelling alone or with only one parent may be asked to show a letter of consent from the other parent and a copy of the child's birth certificate. You'll need to get both documents translated into Spanish and notarised and certified by the Peruvian embassy or consulate in Australia before you start your trip.
- › Dual nationals under the age of 18 must travel with both their passports.
- › Make sure you cross Peru's borders with Ecuador, Bolivia and Chile at official checkpoints where you'll need to get an [entry stamp in your passport](#). If you don't, you may not be able to leave the country as planned.

6. Local laws

Australians in Peru are subject to the local laws, and ignorance is no excuse. Here are some of the rules you should know.

- › Visitors (and locals) must carry photo ID at all times. As that can be a magnet for the wily pickpocket, you can get around the rule by having a





notarised copy of the photo page of your passport. You can get a notarised copy at the [Australian Embassy in Lima](#).

- Peru has rules about how you can behave at sacred and historical sites, and you could be arrested or detained if you do something indecent.
- You're not allowed to take photos of military establishments, equipment and personnel, public water and electricity plants, police stations, harbours, mines and bridges in Peru.
- If you're caught with illegal drugs, you could get a very long jail sentence.
- You can't take antiques or artefacts dating from pre-colonial civilisations out of Peru. You can buy reproductions from dealers, but make sure you get documentation to show they're not authentic.
- Handicrafts and goods that are culturally or historically significant can also be tricky to bring home with you. If you want these as a souvenir, you'll need permission from the [National Institute for Culture of Peru](#) (Telephone: +51 1 226 4162).

7. How to dress for the Peruvian climate

Peru has three main climate zones: a desert coastal strip where winters are mild, cloudy and foggy and summers are warm; the Andean zone, which tends to be cold regardless of the season, and the eastern part of the country, which is home to the Amazonian rainforest and hot and humid throughout the year. Here's what you should bring to wear on your trip.

- If you're sticking to the coastal strips in the summer months between December and March, pack light clothing. During the rest of the year, bring a light jacket or jumper and pants.



- Cusco's rainy season falls between December to March or April, and while days may be warm, you will need a raincoat or waterproof jacket and good shoes. It can get cold in the winter months, so pack warm clothes.
- If you're trekking to Machu Picchu, bring comfortable clothes and shoes. While it can be hot, make sure you have a jumper or jacket with you, as it can get chilly.
- You'll need hiking boots for the Inca Trail, and cold-weather gear for the cool nights.
- The Amazon is hot all year round and tends to be rainy, so bring plenty of changes of clothes.

8. Top foods to try

Lima is one of Latin America's top culinary destinations. Peruvian food is built around the staples of corn, potatoes, chillies and quinoa. Here are some of the top foods to try when you're in Peru.

- *Cuy*, or guinea pig, is a gamey meat that tends to be baked or barbecued on a spit and served whole, with the head still attached.
- *Ceviche* is a sliced raw fish marinated in citrus juice.
- *Causa* is a casserole layered with avocados, potatoes and other ingredients; it's served cold.
- *Aji de Gallina* is a spicy chicken stew made with condensed milk, bread and Parmesan cheese. Its bright yellow colour comes from the aji chilli.

- *Lomo saltado* is a stir-fry-like dish with beef, tomatoes and onions over fried potatoes and rice.
 - *Papa rellena* are mashed potato croquettes filled with spicy minced beef, onions, garlic, tomatoes and herbs.
 - *Rocoto relleno* are spicy capsicums stuffed with minced beef, onions, olives, raisins and herbs and spices, topped with cheese and baked in a sauce made out of egg and milk.
 - *Pollo a la Brasa* is a very popular grilled or roasted chicken dish.
 - *Anticuchos* are skewers of grilled and marinated meat. The beef heart variety, called *anticuchos de corazon*, is a popular street food.
 - *Lucuma*, a bubblegum/maple syrup-flavoured fruit, is in all sorts of desserts including ice cream and drinks.
- find a list of the bus companies with the worst rate of accidents on the [Peruvian Ministry of Transportation website](#).
 - Safety standards in Peru might be lax, so be careful if you plan to take part in adventure activities such as rafting or diving in the country. If you do decide to go ahead, ask the company whether it has the right safety equipment and check ahead about whether conditions.
 - If you're hiking the Inca Trail, it's a good idea to use an experienced guide and always check weather reports in case of heavy rain, which can make the trek dangerous.
 - Avoid travelling by light aircraft and helicopter in Peru if you can, as these can be dangerous in bad weather due to the country's geography. If you're thinking about taking a scenic sight-seeing flight over the Nazca Lines, make sure the company you use is licensed.

9. Getting around Peru

Travelling around Peru can be hazardous, with people in Peru 2.5 times more likely to die in a motor vehicle accident than in Australia. Here are the top tips to ensure you get from A to B safely.

- Poor weather conditions can make roads undrivable. Check with the [National Service of Meteorology and Hydrology of Peru](#) before you leave. If you don't speak Spanish, you can contact the Peruvian tourism office, iPeru, via phone on +51 1 574 8000 or email: iperu@promperu.gob.pe.
- When you're travelling from the airport, arrange a taxi at one of the counters inside and ask your hotel, restaurant or bar to book a licensed taxi for you.
- Peruvian roads and vehicles can be poorly maintained, drivers tend to be aggressive, and crashes that involve buses are common. Try to use reputable bus and transport companies. You'll



10. Emergency contacts in Peru

Peru country code: +51

Police: 105

Tourist police: 0800 22221 (24 hours)

Ambulance: 117 or 106

Fire brigade: 116

iPeru information offices for English-language tourism information in major cities: +51 1 574 8000, 24 hours a day.

Consumer protection agency: INDECOPI operates a 24-hour hotline with English-speaking operations on +51 1 224 7777

For consular emergencies: The Consular Emergency Centre is available 24/7 on +61 2 6261 3305.

Australian Embassy, Lima
Avenida La Paz 1049, 10th Floor
Miraflores, Lima, 18, Peru
Phone: +51 1 630 0500

E-mail: consular.lima@dfat.gov.au

Website: peru.embassy.gov.au

IMAGES: ISTOCK / SHUTTERSTOCK

