



**Lares Trek & Inca Trail  
Machu Picchu  
Cusco & Sacred Valley**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Trip Summary.....	3
Itinerary Snapshot .....	3
Itinerary in Detail .....	4
Visas and Passports .....	7
Flights and Airports.....	7
Packing List .....	8
Money Matters .....	9
Tipping .....	10
Travel Practicalities.....	11
<u>Trip Insurance</u> .....	11
<u>Immunizations</u> .....	11
<u>Water</u> .....	11
<u>Food</u> .....	11
<u>Diarrhea</u> .....	12
<u>Prescriptions</u> .....	12
<u>Voltage</u> .....	12
<u>Thievery</u> .....	12
<u>Jet Lag Precautions</u> .....	12
<u>Altitude Sickness</u> .....	13
Country Facts .....	13
Recommended Reading.....	15
Travel Resources.....	16
Maps of Peru.....	17

## Trip Summary

Hiking the Lares Trek followed by the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu is a true classic that should be on every adventurer's "to-do" list. Exploring ancient paths and exquisite ruins in this spectacular setting will send shivers down your spine. This haunting fortress city nestled below stunning peaks is perhaps the greatest mystery of the Inca Empire. The three-day trek on the Lares Trek followed by the spectacular hike on the Inca Trail to reach this pre-Columbian site is a pilgrimage through time. Beautiful Andean scenery, as well as cultural history, unfolds as we hike up and down steep stone staircases past ancient Inca outposts. You will be impressed with the quality of service and delicious food on the trail. Combine the Lares Trek with the Inca trail, a few days in Cusco, a visit to the Sacred Valley, and you will get a true sense of the magic of Peru!

## Itinerary Snapshot

*(Meals included: B = Breakfast, S= Snacks, L = Lunch, D = Dinner)*

<b>Day 1</b>	Arrive in Cusco. Best to arrive after 10AM. Overnight at Hotel Casa Andina Private Collection* – an elegant, colonial hotel in the heart of historic Cusco and within walking distance of the main plaza. We will gather in the evening for a trip briefing. Overnight at Hotel Casa Andina*. (No meals included)
<b>Day 2</b>	Visit the Inca ruins around Cusco including Sacsayhuaman & Q'enco ruins. Cathedral and Koricancha visit in the afternoon. Overnight at Hotel Casa Andina*. (B + snack)
<b>Day 3</b>	Transfer to the Sacred Valley (approx. 1 hour drive) Incredible cross-country mountain bike ride from Moray to Maras. Explore archaeological sites and visit traditional Peruvian villages along the way. Overnight at the Casa Andina Private Collection hotel Sacred Valley*. (B + L + snack)
<b>Day 4</b>	Begin hiking the Lares Trek! Ascend from the Sacred Valley, following the Huaran River to the the small community of Cancha Cancha. (B + L + D)
<b>Day 5</b>	Trek from Cancha Cancha to the highest pass of the trek: the Abra of Pachacutec. Descend to highland lakes for lunch and continue to the Quiswarani community and camp on the homestead of Mauro Quispe, your muleteer for the trek! (B + L + D)
<b>Day 6</b>	After glimpsing into the life of Mauro and his family, we continue our trek down the valley toward Lares. Overnight in the Sacred Valley(B + L + D)
<b>Day 7</b>	Inca Trail! We start the morning taking the train to km104. After a 4 hour climb, reach Wiñay Wayna with a beautiful view of the Urubamba Valley. Continue trekking through the cloud forest on well the preserved Inca Trail to the Sun Gate of Machu Picchu. Overnight in Aguas Calientes (B + L + D)
<b>Day 8</b>	In the morning, we return to Machu Picchu where we spend most of the day with our knowledgeable guide. In the late afternoon, we climb aboard a first-class train for a ride back to Cusco and a festive Farewell Dinner. Overnight at Hotel Casa Andina* (B)
<b>Day 9</b>	Transfer to airport for flight back home. (B)
<b>Optional Extensions</b>	If you would like to arrive early or stay later and spend more time in Lima, Cusco, or the Peruvian rainforest, we're happy to help you organize and book lodging and activities.

**\*Note: depending on availability we may choose a different hotel but of similar type and equal quality.**

## Itinerary in Detail

### Day 1

Arrive in Cusco, Peru. This usually requires departing from North America the previous day. A Bio Bio Expeditions guide will meet you at the airport - look for the Bio Bio logo. Its best to arrive in Lima the night before, we can book a airport hotel for you, and then fly to Cusco after 10AM in day 1 of your itinerary. If you arrive before 10:00 AM, your hotel rooms will not be ready, and most sites in the city are closed. You will be taken to the Hotel Casa Andina Private Collection\*, a luxurious hotel in a renovated 18<sup>th</sup> century manor house just a few blocks from Cusco's historic central plaza. The hotel has a gourmet restaurant and is known as the "best breakfast in Cusco". Please be sure Bio Bio Expeditions has your flight information. After resting from your trip, acclimatizing to the 11,000 foot altitude and exploring a bit of Cusco we will gather for a trip briefing. The evening is free to dine in any of Cusco's amazing restaurants. (no meals included this day)

To view the hotel online: [www.casa-andina.com/peru/hotels/cusco-hotels/private-collection-cusco/hotel.php](http://www.casa-andina.com/peru/hotels/cusco-hotels/private-collection-cusco/hotel.php)

#### ***A few words about Cusco...***

If the Incas were the Romans of pre-Columbian America, Cusco was their Rome. The Incas built a vast empire that stretched from modern Ecuador and Colombia to southern Chile. The empire, much larger in size than any previous new-world empire, was called *Tawantinsuyo* (the "Four Quarters of the Earth"). Cusco was the heart of the empire, and its exact center was considered to be the main square of the city. Today, Cusco is still laid out much as it was in Inca times. Seen from above, it takes the form of a puma, with the river Tullumayo forming its spine, the ruins of Sacsayhuaman the head, and the main city center the body. The center, or torso, was a tongue of land bordered on the east side by the Tullumayo and on the west by the Huatanay. These two rivers now run under concrete. Cusco was more than just a capital city to the Incas and the millions of subjects in their realm. Cusco was a holy city, a place of pilgrimage that was incredibly important to the Incas.

Cusco is a thriving marketplace where goods and services of all kinds tempt the eye and the pocketbook. The city has an impact on all the senses: sounds greet the ears and the aromas of spicy local kitchens tantalize the nose. The colorful locals draw our attention as they display their wares and remain in their native Quechua dress. Merchants smile and make a sale with characteristic cheerfulness. A good place to take it all in is the central "Plaza De Armas", where on the second floor balconied terraces of the many restaurants, you can enjoy a beer or a cup of tea and see the action from above.

### Day 2

After a sumptuous breakfast at the hotel we will pick you up and transfer to the south of Cusco. Our goal is to visit archeological sites surrounding Cusco, namely Sacsayhuaman & Qenko. Along the way we take in the Peruvian countryside, enjoy spectacular views of the high Andean snow capped peaks, and get a true sense of how people are living in the villages around Cusco. We will spend plenty of time on foot exploring the Inca ruins with our knowledgeable guide. From there, we begin a short and easy walk following an old, but well preserved Inca Trail. Gradually we descend from the rural to the urban, passing by the Temple of the Moon to finally reach the main square of Cusco.

In the afternoon we visit the Cathedral and the temple of the Sun called Koricancha. Overnight at the Casa Andina Private Collection Hotel\*. (Breakfast and snacks included; lunch and dinner not included)

### Day 3

Mountain biking into the Sacred Valley - the perfect, active way to see the Peruvian countryside and have some fun at the same time! We have front suspension Marin mountain bikes, helmets, and gloves. The ride can be tailored to all ability levels as we are followed by a support vehicle. We begin our biking adventure pedaling along the shore of the beautiful highland Lake Huaypo. We then begin our cross-country cruise at the town of Maras (elev.: 3,500 meters - 11,090 feet) until arriving at the archaeological site of Moray – a very impressive Inca agricultural experimental center. During the ride you will have ample time to take in the beautiful Andean landscape – including impressive views of the snow-capped peaks of La Verónica (elev. 5,682 meters -18,600 feet) and Chicon (elev. 5,530 meters, or 18,140 feet). This ride takes us away from the other tourists and allows us to see the less trodden, real Peru, as we bike on dirt roads and footpaths and through traditional villages. Half way through our journey we stop for a gourmet picnic and some well deserved rest in a dramatically picturesque setting. We then begin the downhill portion of the trail, following ancient Inca footpaths, eventually reaching the salt mines of Pichingoto. These are not actually mines, but a rather amazing conglomerate of over 3000 evaporation troughs carved into the hillside where the salt-laden silt gathers and becomes gradually distilled into rock salt. This site is very ancient, but was perfected and developed to a high degree by the Incas. Depending on our time, we can either stop and visit this fascinating complex or continue straight through to the bottom of the Sacred Valley of the Incas. This ride is a true Classic!

For those with no interest in riding bikes, we can arrange a modified walking tour following the same route. We arrive to our beautiful Sacred Valley hotel in the afternoon leaving plenty of time to rest and enjoy the amenities. Before dinner we will pass out the Inca trail duffel bags with instructions on how much weight to pack so they will be ready to go first thing in the morning. Overnight at the Casa Andina PC Valle Hotel\* in the Sacred Valley, a beautiful hotel with views of the Andes on all sides and a planetarium for stargazing the Southern Hemisphere's night skies. (Breakfast, lunch and snacks included; dinner not included)  
Link to Hotel: [www.casa-andina.com/peru/hotels/valle-sagrado-hotels/private-collection-valle-sagrado/hotel.php](http://www.casa-andina.com/peru/hotels/valle-sagrado-hotels/private-collection-valle-sagrado/hotel.php)

### Day 4

#### **It's time for the Lares Trek and Inca Trail!**

##### ***A few words about the Inca Trails and our services...***

The whole of Peru was once criss-crossed with Inca and pre-Inca highways paved with thick interlocking blocks of stone. Sometimes these highways followed the valleys, but just as often they traversed the high mountainsides, tracing impossible pathways and forming narrow ledges over the bottomless gorges of the Andes. The trails were built for men on foot and lightly burdened llamas. Frequently, their gradients gave way to steps, tunnels and long zig-zag trajectories down steep faces. The part of the trail that we will hike was formerly the royal highway to Machu Picchu. The explorer, Hiram Bingham, rediscovered the trail in 1915. Few relatively short hikes in the world can offer such a variety of scenery, staggering views, pre-Columbian ruins, and such a mix of jungle and high sierra. Certainly no other walk known to us will lead you along an ancient highway from one secluded ruin to another, each in a breathtaking setting, each almost perfectly preserved, offering shelter, solitude, and views that no pen or camera can ever adequately record.

We consider our services to be the very best on the Inca Trail! Everyday our porters, head chef, and kitchen crew charge ahead to set up a beautiful lunch – complete with tables and hot cooked meals.

Again they forge ahead of us to make sure we arrive at a comfortable camp and post hiking Happy Hour! We use a spacious Mountain Hardware 4 season dome tent for dining – complete with tables and chairs, a hot beverage station, happy hour snacks, and desserts. We use 3 season tents every night on the trail. In the morning you will awaken to a bowl of hot water for washing up, then a full breakfast to fuel you for another day on the trail. We carry our own private bathroom set up and personal wash basins for evening and morning washing up. We filter abundant amounts of water to be sure you stay hydrated. Meals are multi-course affairs including soup, main course, and dessert – we can cater to any dietary need. Our guides travel with radios and we are accompanied the whole time by an Inca educational expert who will tell us all about the ruins we are passing (and camping next to) and will be our guide throughout Machu Picchu as well. Our guides are also highly knowledgeable about the many plant and animal species we encounter along the way.

Lastly, we strongly encourage that you take the time to train for this hike! While all ages have hiked the Inca Trail, it is a strenuous hike with lots of climbing and descending. The more you prepare ahead of your trip, the more you will be able to enjoy the hike and feel good.

Our walk starts at Huarán community, 60km away from the Sacred Valley of the Incas. We ascend a fertile valley for a period of 4 hours, following Huarán river and passing by local crop fields to finally reach the community of Cancha Cancha (11'000 feet). At this town houses are built entirely of stone. Our camp will be waiting ready for us on the outskirts of this community.

## **Day 5**

The starting point is Cancha Cancha, we continue climbing up until the Abra of Pachacutec (Elev.: 4710 meters.-Approximately 15,000 feet), where we will appreciate much of the Cordillera Urubamba, above the snowy peaks of Pitusiray, Sahuasiray, Colquecruz, Chicon and Helancoma.

Afterwards we descend to the highland lakes of Condereancocha and Hatuncocha for lunch, while we appreciate the beauty of the landscape. We continued for another hour to reach the house of Mauro Quispe, original Quiswarani community and friend. (Elev.: 3870 meters - about 12,350 feet.). He will give us a warm welcome and we camp next to his house.

## **Day 6**

Today, the doors of the house of Mauro will open for us. We have the opportunity to meet his family, share the morning with them and learn more about their lifestyle. They work the land and livestock for subsistence and are also very skilled weavers. We say goodbye to the family Quispe and continue trekking down our route to Lares Valley.

Once we get to the road, we will drive 30 minutes to our lunch spot, before Lares pass. Then, we will continue driving to the Sacred Valley where we rest up for the Inca Trail the next day!

## **Day 7**

In the morning we take the train from the station located at the village of Ollantaytambo to Km 104 of the railway, the starting point of our trek. First we pass by the ruins of Chachabamba and then begin a four-hour ascent. Along, we have a spectacular view of the Urubamba Valley to finally reach the magnificent ruins of Wiñay Wayna (Forever Young). From this point we continue our tour by one of the best preserved sections of

the trail, through a wet cloud forest full of variety of flora and fauna. Finally we cross the entry of Intipunku (Gate of Sun) after which, we find an unforgettable sweep of natural beauty and human artistry: the magical city of Machu Picchu.

After our brief initial visit, we take a bus to the clean little town of Aguas Calientes, nestled in the steep Urubamba River Valley. (From Km104 to Machu Picchu / 11mi / 8 hours hiking.) Overnight at Andina Luxury Hotel\*. (Breakfast and lunch included, dinner not included)

## Day 8

In the morning, we take a 20 minute bus ride up the twisty road back to Machu Picchu. Those who still have the energy are welcome to hike the steep staircase straight up to the ruins! We spend most of the day at the ruins with our knowledgeable Peruvian guide who will show us all the wonders of Machu Picchu. In the late afternoon, we climb aboard a first class train for a spectacular ride back to Cusco. The train tracks themselves are a miracle of human ingenuity and tenacity. The ride down the mountain will give you ample time to reflect on your journey by foot and provides us with an early evening arrival in Cusco. We will check back into our hotel, the Casa Andina Private Collection\*, for our last night in Cusco. (Breakfast included)

## Day 9

Transfer to airport for your flight back home, or begin your trip extension. Call for ideas and details on an extension to the coast or the Amazon.

**\*The hotels listed depend on availability. If we choose a different hotel, it will be of equal type and quality.**

## Visas and Passports

U.S. citizens are required to have a passport that is valid for 6 months after your travel dates begin.

The Inca Trail requires a permit (even for one day). ***The passport you give Bio Bio to get this permit MUST match the passport you have with you when you are in Peru.*** If, for any reason, you get a new passport, it is of vital importance that you tell us and send us a copy of the new passport. This situation can arise if you, perhaps, lose your passport, get married and change your name, or use different names on different documents.

## Flights and Airports

You are responsible for booking all flights, international as well as domestic. However, if you need help, please feel free to call or email the Bio Bio office. One travel agent we often use is:

G&G Travel | Gilda Gutierrez  
gildagutierrez@comcast.net  
866-498-0530 or 786-206-0710

### **Flying In...**

The tour officially begins in Cusco on Day 1. You will most likely fly into Lima and then transfer to a domestic flight. Please try not to arrive in Cusco before 10:00 AM as your hotel room will not be ready and most things are closed in the city. You may want to fly in the day before and spend the night in Lima. We can arrange a hotel for that evening if you prefer, or we can arrange extra nights for you in Cusco.

### **Flying Out...**

You can fly out of Cusco to Lima and then home all on the last day. We suggest spending a big part of the day in Cusco and then departing Cusco in the early evening. Or you can choose to spend more time in either of these cities and fly home at a later date. We are happy to help you arrange tours and lodging.

When you leave Lima, there is a departure tax of approximately US\$30, which is typically included with your airfare.

#### TRAVEL TIMES BY PLANE

Miami to Lima: 5:25 hrs

Lima to Cusco: 1.5 hrs

**Peru is on Central Standard Time**

## **Packing List**

### **Baggage Allowance and Suggested Gear**

Please see what restrictions your airline imposes, as the rules and allowances are constantly changing. Typically you are allowed two checked bags up to 50Lbs each, plus one carry on bag and a purse.

You will be provided with one soft duffle bag when you arrive to Cusco to pack all your gear for the Lares Trek. The porters will carry this duffle bag. Your suitcase will be left at the hotel with non-trekking clothes and items – while your suitcases are kept in safe storage we still recommend using a lock on your suitcase. Keep all important documents, including your passport, with you in your daypack. Please note that your Lares Trek bag with your camping gear will have a **weight limit of 22 lbs!** This is required by law in Peru to protect the porters. That does not include your tent which will be carried in a different bag.

- Sleeping bag:** A 20 or 30-degree bag is warm enough, a compression stuff-sack is helpful to save space.
- Sleeping pad:** This is very important, and not something you want to skimp on. Thermarest makes a good inflatable pad. We can rent Thermarest pads for you in Peru if you'd like. Please let us know in advance so we can reserve them.
- Camp pillow or stuff sack to use as a pillow**
- Travel Clothing** - 2-3 pairs of pants and 4-5 shirts that are lightweight and quick drying. A long skirt or nice pants are also nice for special dinners in towns.
- A day backpack** - We recommend that you carry the following items in your daypack: water, sunglasses, camera and film, extra layers in case the weather turns cool, flashlight/headlamp/blister kit, any prescription medications you use, your passport, sun hat, warm hat, sunscreen.
- Flashlight and or headlamp,** and extra batteries. The days are 12 hours long on the equator so it will get dark around 6:00pm.



- ❑ **Toiletry kit, personal medicines**, particularly allergy and diabetic prescriptions, shampoo, soap, toothbrush, lotion, bug repellent.
- ❑ **Rain jacket and pants** – lightweight Gortex or similar.
- ❑ **Shoes 2 pairs** – One pair for city visits, towns, villages. One pair of lightweight hiking shoes for hiking.
- ❑ **1 fleece light or mid weight** – for layering, or a lightweight wool sweater.
- ❑ **1 fleece zip up mid weight jacket**
- ❑ **2 pairs long underwear** – synthetic material both top and bottom
- ❑ **2 or 3 T-shirts**
- ❑ **Hiking pants of synthetic material or fleece pants** - 1 pair of pants that are comfortable to hike in, smart pants by Exofficio or similar that have zip off options.
- ❑ **Hiking shorts**
- ❑ **Down Jacket** - the temperature at certain camps can drop below freezing and a warm down jacket as well as multiple layers of fleece are important to have.
- ❑ **Wide brimmed sun hat**
- ❑ **Lotion and sunscreen**
- ❑ **Insect Repellent** – minimum recommended 20%deet (Jungle Juice) please note: no instances of malaria have ever been registered on this trip.
- ❑ **Camera, film and batteries** – back up memory cards and batteries
- ❑ **Personal Snacks**- You will be provided with great snacks (energy bars, trail mix, fruits) everyday and delicious food on the Inca Trail. Only bring snacks if you have a have a favorite kind or personal preference.
- ❑ **Swim Suit**
- ❑ **H2O bottle** (water bottle or camelback) key item! You should have at least a 2-liter water carrying capacity. Filtered water is provided. You will be able to refill your bottles in the morning, at lunchtime and when you arrive to the camp in the afternoon.
- ❑ **2 heavy duty trash bags** to keep your camp gear dry inside your duffel (and later for laundry)
- ❑ **Ziplock bags** - several sizes to help organize your camp items, lotions, socks, underwear, etc.
- ❑ **Moist Towlettes** - for personal cleaning
- ❑ **Small towel** for washing up at camp
- ❑ **Trekking Poles (optional)** – **must have rubber tips on the bottom to protect the trail.** These can also be rented.

\*Remember when packing your carry-on bag to bring any medications needed as well as any toothpaste or lotions in a plastic zip loc bag for security. You may want to bring a toothbrush on your overnight flight as well as a change of clothing.

## **Money Matters**

### **Currency**

Peru is typical of many South American countries in that it effectively operates a dual-currency system. Both the US dollar (dólares) and the Peruvian Nuevo Sol (soles) are in circulation and although the government prefers people to use soles, most sizeable purchases are made in dollars. In practice, this means that anything costing more than, say, a meal in a nice restaurant, is paid for in dollars. The Nuevo Sol is perfectly stable so you don't have to worry about inflation problems during your stay! Please make sure that all bills are in good condition and do not have tears or marks.

### **Extra Expenses**

You are responsible for some meals as stipulated in the itinerary. These meals will cost between \$5 and \$25. And of course, you can go all out at a high-end restaurant. For meals that are included, you will need to pay for your own alcohol. You will also need money for gifts and tipping.

## **ATMs**

Plus, Cirrus and other networks connecting ATMs are available in Peru. The exchange rates you get when withdrawing from cash machines are standard. This is the approach we usually recommend. Cash machines dispense both dollars and soles and most accept the major debit cards. Be aware of counterfeit currency and avoid being followed to and from an ATM machine! Go in pairs!

## **Credit Cards**

If your credit card has been programmed with a PIN, it's likely you can use your card at Peruvian ATMs to withdraw money as a cash advance. Always ask your bank before you leave home about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad, the limit each day, and also let them know where you are going so they do not put a hold on your card. You may be charged a fee for each transaction.

Most of the bigger restaurants and shops accept credit cards. If you have American Express, Visa, Master Card and Diners Club, you're probably equipped for any establishment that takes cards. If you only have one, have VISA. A shopkeeper may require you to pay the credit card fee for purchases, so for the most ease, we recommend you use cash whenever possible.

## **Banking Hours**

Banks are generally open from 9am to 6pm. Some banks close for 2 hours from 1pm to 3pm. Banco de Credito del Peru does NOT close. In Cusco you will find many banks on Sol Avenue, one block from the main square. It is recommended to go to an "exchange office". You must bring your passport to exchange money. Never change a large sum (more than \$100) and again, go in pairs, and avoid being followed by robbers.

## **Personal Checks**

Personal checks are not accepted in shops or at your hotels. It's a good idea, however, to bring a few for possible emergencies.

## **Travelers Cheques**

Travel checks are less desirable as fewer and fewer places will change them, and you may end up in long bank lines. You will need to show your passport to cash your checks at the bank.

# **Tipping**

Tipping is, of course, entirely voluntary and how much you give depends on how you feel about the service you have received. Typically, you should designate 10-15% of the land cost of the trip for tips. For example, a \$4000 trip would mean \$400 in tips. This total will be split up on 2 different occasions between the porters and guides.

1. At the end of the Inca Trail, each client should tip the porters +/- \$150. This will be divided up among the 20-30 staff that have made your Inca trek possible.
2. At the farewell dinner of Day 8 in Cusco, you can give the largest portion of your tip to the trip leader and he will divide it up amongst himself and the various tour guides.

Other smaller tips might be for airport luggage carriers, hotel staff and drivers. This is where \$1 bills or single soles come in handy. The norm at restaurants is approximately 5-15%.

For some background information, Peru has a minimum salary of 550 Nuevo Soles (US\$170) monthly for a 6-day, 48-hour week. However, in many of the lower paid jobs (e.g. waiters, porters etc) this is not always enforced. 1 Nuevo Sol (soles) is roughly the equivalent of US\$.30.

## **Travel Practicalities**

### **Trip Insurance**

Bio Bio Expeditions encourages all clients to obtain travel insurance to cover unexpected events such as trip cancellations, trip delay, lost baggage, medical expenses, etc. We will also forward a brochure from Travelex (<https://www.travelex-insurance.com/consumer/welcome.aspx>). Our agent code is 05-8655. They have good rates and excellent coverage for international travel.

### **Immunizations**

Although there are no immunizations required to travel to Peru, it is usually recommended that typhoid and diphtheria-tetanus protection be current. Hepatitis A, taken just before departure, is also recommended. The cholera vaccination is no longer officially required, and cholera can be avoided by practicing strict food and water precautions. In general, we advise that you consult your physician regarding recommended immunizations and other health precautions. Bio Bio Expeditions does not take responsibility for which medications or inoculations you and your physician deem necessary for your safe participation on the expedition in Peru.

For further information, call the CDC's International Traveler's Hotline:

Phone: 1-888-232-4636

Online: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

### **Water**

Although it requires a little extra caution when drinking fluids in Peru, it is essential to stay well hydrated. We advise that you not drink any of the tap water in Peru; this includes no ice in your drink. Bottled water is fine to drink and can be ordered at most restaurants and found in local grocery stores. Ask for "agua mineral, sin gas (non-carbonated) or con gas (carbonated)". When ordering sodas, it is best to request them without ice (sin hielo), as the ice is usually made from tap water. Additionally, be sure to brush your teeth with bottled water.

While you are on the trail, you will have the opportunity to refill your water bottle and/or camelback in the morning, at lunch and in the evening with water that we provide.

### **Food**

The major precaution regarding food pertains to raw, unpeeled fruits and vegetables (including lettuce) - avoid them unless you are dining in a high-end restaurant! If you can't peel it, don't eat it as it has probably been

washed in tap water, or not washed at all, and that can make you sick. The high altitude also affects one's digestive system so it is recommended to eat in moderation and avoid rich, thick foods (such as mayonnaise). However, don't be afraid to try new foods and dishes - just be cautious. Peru has some of the finest, most delicious cuisine in the world! We want you to experience the many new flavors and local cuisine, but there are some things to consider when making food choices, especially where you are eating. The more high end restaurants in Cusco are fairly safe bets for trying new things. Street food should generally be avoided. This brings us to our next topic...

### **Diarrhea**

Traveling to Peru is going to have a notable impact on your body. Despite the many precautions we all take to stay healthy, occasionally one may experience diarrhea. The major problem associated with diarrhea is fluid loss leading to severe dehydration, so it is important to maintain plentiful fluid intake. Avoid milk and avoid caffeine, as it will only further dehydrate you. The best drinks are weak tea, mineral water, and caffeine-free soft drinks. Ideally it is best to let diarrhea run its course, however you may want to bring over-the-counter diarrhea medication to minimize your potential discomfort. We also advise that you carry your own supply of toilet paper, as most of the restrooms in South America either don't have TP, or they charge you for it. The bottom line (no pun intended) is to drink plenty of fluids and get lots of rest! Lastly, we encourage that you, and all our staff, practice impeccable hand hygiene – you can't wash your hands enough! Sanitizer gels are great when hand washing with soap and water is not available.

### **Prescriptions**

If you currently take prescription medications, be sure to have a plentiful supply and also the doctor's written prescription in case you need a refill. It is best to carry medications in your carry-on bag in case of lost luggage. Also, if you wear prescription glasses or contacts, we advise that you bring along a spare set.

### **Voltage**

Electrical current in Peru is 220 volts AC, and the plugs are different from the USA two prong.

### **Thievery and Safety**

Although the Peruvians are a warm, friendly, fun-loving people, thievery is a common problem. Always keep your wits about you and be aware of your surroundings. When with other people, watch out for each other. Large crowds are prime locations for pick-pocketing to occur. Keep your money in a money belt or hidden pouch around your neck and under your shirt. When purchasing items, do not pull out lots of money. **We advise that you leave all valuable jewelry, including watches, at home.** Thieves often work in pairs or groups - one tries to distract you (e.g.: by squirting food or paint on your clothing) and in the ensuing confusion, another one makes off with your belongings. The areas around the main square in Cusco are well patrolled by police and tourist police. However, we encourage you to be very cautious and never be walking the streets alone after dark.

### **Jet Lag Precautions**

When you cross several time zones to reach your destination, you often lose many hours of regular sleep. On arrival, your body then must suddenly adjust to new sleeping and eating patterns. The result is jet lag. Its

symptoms are fatigue – often compounded by insomnia and restlessness – irritability, and vague disorientation. You cannot totally avoid jet lag’ but you can minimize it. Here’s how:

- Start your trip well rested. Try to begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave.
- Switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane. Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Try to sleep on overnight flights
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before and during your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and or fruit juice while flying. You should buy a large bottle of water at a kiosk right before boarding – once you have cleared inside security and are “inside”.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap, unless you didn’t sleep at all on the plane.
- Don’t push yourself to see a lot on your first day
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

### **Altitude Sickness**

Cusco sits at over 11,000 feet. This is one of the highest places most of us have ever, or will ever, stay for an extended period of time. The altitude can cause some physical reaction in almost anyone. Most people experience shortness of breath, headaches, and some dehydration. We recommend taking it easy your first day and avoiding alcohol and tobacco. If you feel sick, be sure to rest, breathe deeply, drink lots of fluids (bottled water), and perhaps take a mild pain killer for headaches. Locally brewed coca tea also seems to help. True altitude sickness is rare, but if the symptoms become severe, please let a Bio Bio Expeditions representative know. The front desk of the hotel often has spare oxygen bottles if needed.

How well your individual body adapts to the thinner air depends a good deal on innate factors that you have no control over. That being said, people in top shape often acclimate better because they expend less energy hiking, leaving their bodies ready for the task of acclimatization. Proper hydration has also been proven to be essential in this task. There is no substitute for being in top shape and staying hydrated!

Many altitude physicians recommend bringing the following medications for prevention and or treatment of altitude related problems.

- Diamox- e.g. 125 mg, twice a day. Beginning 24 hours before ascent to a sleeping elevation of 8,000-10,000 feet and continuing through duration of climb. Please discuss with your physician.

## **Country Facts**

### **Demographics**

Almost the same size as Alaska, Peru is the third largest country in South America, covering 496,226 square miles. Peru is divided into three distinct geographic regions: the narrow, dry coastal plain in the west; the high Andes Mountains roughly in the center; and the tropical lowlands of the Amazon Basin to the east. Peru shares with Bolivia the highest navigable body of water in the world – Lake Titicaca. There is little rainfall along the coast, although the winter is foggy, humid and cool. The capital city of Lima, the temperature is moderate year-round, averaging 65 F.

Several of South America's most advanced cultures lived in pre-Columbian Peru. The last of these groups was the great Incan Empire, which was unsurpassed in the art of stonecutting and also achieved a high degree of economic and political development. Incan and earlier Chimu ruins, notably at Cusco, Chan Chan, and Machu Picchu, make Peru a favorite destination for archaeologists and tourists. In 1532, the Spanish invaded Peru under the leadership of Francisco Pizarro. They conquered the Incas the next year. The area soon became the richest and most powerful Spanish colony in South America because of its location and many mineral treasures.

Under the leadership of South American liberator Jose de San Martin, Peru declared independence from Spain in July 1821. With the help of Simon Bolivar, the Venezuelan general who liberated several other countries, the fight for full independence was won by 1826. For a century, Peru worked to secure its territory and build its social institutions.

Peru is a republic. It is divided into 24 departamentos (similar to states). The president holds executive power and serves a five-year term. All citizens age 18 and older are required to vote. The unicameral Congress consists of 120 members, who serve five-year terms. Major political parties include the Change 90-New Majority Party, Union for Peru, the Popular Christian Party, and the Popular Action Party.

The population of Peru is approximately 27 million and is growing at 1.75 percent annually. Population density is generally low due to the country's large land area. Peru's population is ethnically diverse. About 45 percent is Indian, descendants of the Incan Empire. Many ethnic and linguistic divisions exist among Indians, some of whom are still fairly isolated in the Amazon jungle. Another 37 percent is of mixed European and Indian heritage. Fifteen percent is of European descent (mostly Spanish), and the remaining 3 percent is composed of blacks (descendants of West African slaves), Japanese, Chinese and other smaller groups. About half of the population is younger than age 20. Lima is the largest city, with more than seven million residents.

### **Language**

The official languages in Peru are Spanish and Quechua but Spanish will be your most useful language, even in the highlands. The Spanish spoken in Peru is almost identical to the Castilian Spanish of Madrid, albeit with slightly different pronunciation and a few vocabulary changes. In the high Andes, particularly around Cusco and Puno, many people still speak Aymara or Quechua (the language of the Incas) as a first language, although almost all will also speak Spanish. The good news is that in most places like restaurants, hotels, etc., there is usually someone who speaks English - and, of course, all our representatives and guides speak both English and Spanish.

If you do speak some 'Spanish' then you shouldn't have too many problems speaking with the locals in Peru. The major difference in accent between Peruvian Spanish and Castilian Spanish is that the letters c and z are pronounced like the English s rather than the traditional th. In general, Peruvian Spanish is a little slower and less heavily accented than most Spanish you would hear in Spain.

## Weather Tips

Weather in Lima and Cusco average day highs and lows.

LIMA	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
High	67	66	67	69	68	69	79	80	80	76	72	69
Low	60	60	59	61	39	41	68	69	69	66	63	61

CUSCO	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
High	66	67	68	69	69	69	65	65	66	67	67	66
Low	32	35	39	41	42	43	43	43	43	36	36	32

## Recommended Reading

- 1) Turn Right at Machu Picchu – Rediscovering the Lost City One Step at a Time by Mark Adams
- 2) Ines of My Soul by Isabel Allende
- 3) Cradle of Gold: The Story of Hiram Bingham, a Real-Life Indiana Jones, and the Search for Machu Picchu by Christopher Heaney
- 4) Exploring Cusco by Peter Frost
- 5) Touching the Void by Joe Simpson
- 6) The White Rock by Hugh Thomson
- 7) A Guide to the Birds of Machu Picchu by Barry Walker
- 8) Inca Gold by Clive Cussler
- 9) Exploration Fawcett by Colonel Percy Harrison Fawcett (Century 1988)
- 10) The bridge of San Luis Rey by Thornton Wilder
- 11) Conquest of the Incas by John Hemmingway
- 12) Inca Kola by Matthew Paris
- 13) Into the Forests of the Night by John Simson
- 14) Realm of the Incas by Max Milligan
- 15) The Inca Trail by Richard Danbury
- 16) Heart of the Amazon by Yossi Ghinsberg

# Travel Resources

## Travel

[www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/south-america/peru/](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/south-america/peru/) - Lonely Planet

## Money

[www.xe.net/ucc/](http://www.xe.net/ucc/) - This is a universal currency converter site.

[www.oanda.com/](http://www.oanda.com/) - Exchange rates and currency forecasts

[www.visa.com/atmlocator](http://www.visa.com/atmlocator) - A list of ATM machines world wide

## Clothing / Gear

[www.patagonia.com](http://www.patagonia.com) - Expedition clothing.

[www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com) - Expedition gear and clothing.

[www.mountainhardwear.com](http://www.mountainhardwear.com) - Tents, sleeping bags, expeditions wear.

[www.exofficio.com](http://www.exofficio.com) - Lightweight travel clothes - Great for Safaris!

[www.eaglecreek.com](http://www.eaglecreek.com) - Excellent travel gear and packing tips from the experts

[www.cameraworld.com](http://www.cameraworld.com) - The best prices on camera and video gear!

[www.nrsweb.com](http://www.nrsweb.com) - Anything you could ever want for the river.

[www.llbean.com](http://www.llbean.com) - Gear and clothing for any adventure.

## Health

[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) - All the latest recommendations on vaccination and important information on health concerns worldwide.

## Passport and Embassy Information

[www.travel.state.gov/passport](http://www.travel.state.gov/passport) - How to get a passport fast! - List of Embassies worldwide.

## Weather

[www.accuweather.com](http://www.accuweather.com) - Find out the weather anywhere in the world!

## Travel Warnings

[www.travel.state.gov/travel/](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/) - State department warnings for overseas travelers.

## Conservation

[whc.unesco.org/en/list/274](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/274) – UNESCO World Heritage Site information

[www.edf.org](http://www.edf.org) – Environmental Defense Fund - Stay current on all environmental issues.

[www.tnc.org](http://www.tnc.org) - The Nature Conservancy - Saving the last great rivers.

[www.irn.org](http://www.irn.org) - International Rivers Network - Supports local communities working to protect their rivers and watersheds.

[www.conservation.org](http://www.conservation.org) – Conservation International – working to ensure a healthy, productive planet for everyone, because people need nature to thrive.

[wwf.panda.org](http://wwf.panda.org) - World Wildlife Fund - stop the degradation of our planet's natural environment, and build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.



# Maps of Peru



Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

