

# Pre Departure Checklist: Peru

---

## Climate & Weather

Weather is very often one of the determining factors when we choose to travel. Peru's climate can be divided into two seasons - wet and dry - though this varies, depending on the geographical region. The coast and western Andean slopes are generally dry, with the summer falling between December and April; during the rest of the year, the *garúa* (coastal fog) moves in and the sun is rarely seen. In the Andes, the dry season is from May to September, while the wet season takes up the remainder of the year. On the eastern slopes of the Andes, the drier months are similar to the highlands, though the wet season (January to April) is more pronounced. The Mountains: (Cusco, Puno, etc) November – Mid April is the wet season with most rain in January and February. It's usually clear and dry most mornings with outbursts of heavy rain in the afternoons. The daily temperatures are typically in the 60's °F with only a small drop at night. However, it is advisable to layer clothes to add to remove as the temperature changes, as it can vary widely, especially at different altitudes. Waterproof clothing is also recommended.

## Health Issues

**Water:** Bottled water is readily available and recommended at all times.

**Food:** An anti-gastric or upset stomach remedy is recommended as you may be eating food your system is unused to. We recommend you seek a medical practitioner's advice on up to date precautionary medicine. It is not recommended to eat food from street vendors.

**Vaccinations:** No vaccinations are officially required of travelers to Peru, but you are wise to take certain precautions, especially if you are planning to travel to jungle regions. A yellow-fever vaccine is strongly recommended for trips to the Amazon. Please contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (800/311-3435; [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)). Carry your vaccination records with you to avoid problems.

**High Altitude:** On reaching heights above 3000m, you will feel the effects of hypoxia (lack of oxygen) upon arrival at high altitude. Heart pounding and shortness of breath are a normal response to the lack of oxygen in the air. To prevent problems, try to take things easy as soon as you arrive. Once settled in your hotel room lie down for a while and drink plenty of fluids. Don't plan any strenuous treks; avoid alcohol, cigarettes and heavy food. You may drink mate de coca, which is coca – leaf tea (which is legal) available in every hotel lobby. Locals recommend it. If symptoms become more severe and prolonged it is best to quickly seek medical attention and make arrangements to descend to a lower altitude.

## Money Matters

Peru's official currency is the nuevo sol (S/). At press time 1 USD = 3.30 Soles. Money can be changed in banks, exchange houses, or first-class hotels. Many shops, restaurants, and businesses will take U.S. dollars as payment. Be prepared however to receive your

change in Soles. Try to carry denominations of 50 and lower in both. Costs in Peru are lower, on average, than those in developed countries, but higher than those in many neighbouring countries. Lima and Cuzco are the most expensive places in the country. Meals average between \$2-\$10. Travellers' checks are changed at a slightly lower rate than cash and can be difficult to change. Credit cards are widely accepted. ATMs (Visa and Plus system are most widely recognized) are now the best way to extract money in Peru, and pay for your purchases in cash.

## Security Concerns

Overall Peru is a safe country but we recommend you take some precautions. Crowded tourist sites all over the world are at pickpocket and gypsy risk and Peru is no exception. One should always be on alert for these petty thieves, but a good offence is the best defense. Keep your money hidden preferably in an inside pocket or money belt. Travellers should guard against the theft of their luggage and other belongings, particularly US Passports, at the Lima airport. In downtown Lima, and other areas frequented by tourists, the risk of street crime is high. Do not go anywhere alone. Stay alert, especially in crowded plazas and markets. Wear your money belt and hold on to your camera. If you have a daypack, wear it in front.

## Customs & Behavior

**Tipping:** Additional gratuities for guides, tour escorts, and bus drivers are expected. Tipping, of course, is a personal matter. If you feel they did an above average job, you may tip more. Local guides and drivers' \$2-4 per person per day. A general sales tax (IGV) is added automatically to most consumer bills (18%). In some upmarket hotels or restaurants, service charges of 10-15% are often added. At all airports, passengers must pay a departure tax: S/98 (\$28) for international flights and S/18 (\$5.15) for domestic flights, payable in cash only. This tax only applies when you are leaving Peru and can only be paid in cash.

**People:** The Peruvian people are very receptive to foreigners and will welcome you warmly.

**Language:** Spanish is the official language of Peru. The Amerindian languages Quechua (recently given official status) is spoken primarily in the highlands. English is not widely spoken but is understood by those affiliated with the tourist industry in major cities and tourist destinations. Most people you meet on the street will have only a very rudimentary understanding of English, if that. Learning a few key phrases of Spanish will help immensely.

## Clothing & Packing

**Electricity:** 220 voltage.

**Clothing:** Light, comfortable clothing, with warmer clothes for the winter months are recommended. Dress is mostly casual. Remember on tour there is a lot of walking, often on uneven surfaces, so comfortable clothes and shoes are a must. In addition, use sunblock

rated at least 15 SPF, because the risk of sunburn is greater at high altitudes.

### Airline Procedures

Please note that at time of printing, security measures dictate you must check in to your international flight no later than 3 hours prior to departure.

**Seating:** Please note that most airlines do not pre-seat groups. They will do their best to seat together those booked together, however, they cannot be guaranteed.

**Frequent flier numbers:** It is the passenger's responsibility to provide frequent flier information directly to the airlines at check-in. Please note: not all airlines award frequent flier miles for group departures, or give partner miles.

**Baggage:** For your own comfort, and the comfort of your fellow travelers, please limit the size of your luggage to (per person):

- Two checked bags at 53 in/134 cm each. The maximum weight per checked bag is 70 lbs/32 kgs.
- One carry-on bag at 45 in/114 cm. The maximum weight per carry-on bag is 15 lbs/ 7 kgs.

No responsibility is accepted for loss or damage to baggage or personal belongings. When checking in to your international flight, check your bags to the destination of your first overnight.

### Miscellaneous

**Insurance:** We highly recommend travel insurance for ALL clients to cover accident, illness or lost baggage. New options allow for last minute cancellations with pre-existing conditions covered.

**Time:** 1 Hour difference from Minneapolis.

**Internet Access:** Almost every upscale hotel provides Internet services in Peru. A short walk in any direction also brings you to internet cafes.

**Taxis:** It is recommended that you have your hotel call a taxi for you. Secondly, when you hail a taxi from the street please have one rate agreed upon, only to find that the rate has changed when you reach your destination, or the driver doesn't have enough change when you get there.

**Passport and Visas :** You MUST have a valid passport to travel, and your passport should be valid at least through September 2005. Visas are not required for US citizens. Destination Partners will not be held responsible for insufficient travel documentation.

**Shopping:** Bring an empty suitcase. Peru offers fabulous bargains, some of the finest and best-priced crafts anywhere. Its long traditions of textile weaving and colorful markets bursting with tourists have produced a dazzling display of alpaca-wool sweaters, blankets, ponchos, shawls, scarves, typical Peruvian hats, and other woven items. Peru's ancient indigenous civilizations were some of the world's greatest potters, and reproductions of Moche, Nasca, Paracas, and other ceramics are available. In some cities -- especially Lima, and Cusco -- antique textiles and ceramics are still available. Furthermore, all prices are negotiable except for those in the most upscale shops, and the more relentless bargainners can walk away with incredible deals on some unique finds.

**Tour inclusions:** the following features are included in your tour price and have been pre-paid for you: round trip air as specified in your itinerary, hotel accommodations in twin bedded rooms with private bath, meals as indicated on your itinerary (b=breakfast, l=lunch, d=dinner), full schedule of sightseeing as per itinerary.

**Not included:** any item not listed above, for example: air taxes, passport/visa fees, meals not specified in your daily schedule, beverages or liquor with meals, items of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls, optional sightseeing tours, insurance, tips, etc.

**Individual activities:** there is no refund for unattended activities, and any optional activities are at your own expense. Please settle your bills for incidental charges upon check-out. Please inform your escort if you plan to skip any scheduled sightseeing so that others are not kept waiting. As members of a tour group, we ask you cooperate with your fellow participants and your tour guide. (Any unused tour portions are not refundable)

**BEST TIP OF ALL:** Travel with an open mind. When leaving the country, don't expect to encounter our way of life until you return home. Enjoy the new sights, people, and food. You will return home a more knowledgeable person with a lifetime of memories. Remember, being tolerant is more than good manners, it is practical, and your customs and food may seem as peculiar to your hosts as theirs seem to you. Regardless of any language differences, a smile and a thank you are universally understood.. In a small way, each of us can be goodwill ambassadors. Read as much as you can about your destination – the more you know the more interesting your tour will be.

### Packing Tips

○ **Don't pack too much.** The less the better and if in doubt leave it at home. The veteran travelers trick is to lay out everything you need, then put half back in your closet.

○ **Pack only as many toiletry items as you'll use.** Small sample sizes are excellent. **Be sure your bags are clearly labeled.** Remove old destination labels and use the luggage tags provided to you. Enclose a copy of your itinerary in each bag. A bright colored tape near the handle of your bag will help make it easy to spot.

○ **Don't pack anything fragile, valuable, or perishable.**

○ **Pack some old clothes.** You can lighten your load as you go by taking along old clothes and discarding them as you use them – pajamas, socks, etc. It's one way of compensating for the new souvenirs you are likely to pick up!

○ **Pack some of your traveling companion's clothes in your bag and vise versa.** Both of you will then have a change of clothes if one bag is lost. Pack toiletries and a change of clothes in your carry-on bag.

○ **Pack a sweater and a pair of slipper-socks** in your carry-on to wear on the plane in case it gets cold, which it often does.