

Peru

Planning a trip to Peru? Then you should talk to us... We know this country exceptionally well. We offer independent expert advice and the ability to deliver top quality itineraries with the best tour operators that are exceptional value for money. Arranging your travel through The Specialist Travel Consultancy also reduces the time you have to spend researching and planning your trip. And our service is completely free!

Contact us to discuss your travel requirements on **0845 838 7667** or for more information on the service we offer please visit our website: www.thestc.co.uk

We arrange tailor made trips:

- Cultural tours •
- Walking & trekking •
- Geography & Biology tours •
- Spanish Schools •
- Link school visits •
- Adventure Travel & Expeditions •

Facts & Highlights

Full Name: The Republic of Peru

Area: 1,285,220 sq km (496,225 sq ml)

Population: 27.148 million (est. 2004)

Capital City: Lima (population: 8.27m)

People: Indigenous (45%), Mestizo (37%), European/White (15%), other 3%

Language(s): Spanish (official), Quechua (official), Aymara and a number of minor Amazonian languages

Religion(s): Roman Catholic (90%)

Currency: Nuevo Sol

Government: Constitutional system of Presidential democracy.

Electricity: 220 volts AC, 60Hz

Time: GMT -5 hours



Machu Picchu & The Inca Trail: Stand at the Sun Gate as the dawn breaks to reveal the Inca Citadel in all its glory.

The Colca Canyon: see a Condor ride the thermals in the deepest canyon in the world.

Lake Titicaca: The highest navigable lake in the world and home to the famous Uros Indians and their floating reed islands.

The Amazon: Discover the abundant wildlife and flora in the largest rainforest on earth.

Cordillera Blanca & Huayhuash: Trek in some of the world's most spectacular mountains and see the setting of Joe Simpson's extraordinary escape in "Touching the Void".

Pisac: Visit this vibrant and colourful weekday market and barter for your wants.

Kuelap: Venture way off the beaten track into the far north of Peru, and see this vast pre-Inca ruin.

Any first time visitor to Peru will be astounded at the sheer size, diversity and majesty of the landscapes they encounter. It's an old cliché "something for everyone", but for schools and colleges planning tours or adventurous expeditions Peru offers an exceptionally diverse range of options from which to choose.

With the majestic scenery infiltrated at every stage by a history that has seen many changes of culture and influence, you have an absorbing assault on the senses.

Step just a little off the well trodden tourist trails and you will find a Peru that has changed little in many hundreds of years. Traditional markets, friendly welcomes and the vibrant colour of the Quechua Indian dress all add to the experience.

Depending on your trip requirements, we can guide you through the process of arranging everything from an in-depth tour or a simple trek on the Inca Trail (allowing for essential acclimatisation in Cuzco beforehand), right up to extended remote trekking in the heart of the Andes followed by a rafting descent of the Tambopata river and an exploration of the flora or fauna in the Amazon basin.

Durations of from two to four or five weeks can easily be catered for, with

trekking, mountain biking, river descents, community projects, biodiversity studies and cultural tours all possible.

Both Lima and Cuzco offer the opportunity of language schools where pupils can stay with local families and attend Spanish classes on a daily basis. These are typically a week in length, but can be tailored to a group's particular needs, both in terms of duration and ability.

The incredible growth in tourism in Peru over the last five years has brought with it difficult decisions for the Peruvian government, particularly with the regulation of The Inca Trail and entry to Machu Picchu. The introduction of limits on the number of trekkers can only be a good thing in ensuring the long term sustainability of the trail. However, this will only work as part of a wider policy on sustainable tourism. The STC is committed to promoting responsible tourism and will only recommend tour operators that have visible environmental and ethical policies in place.

As great as the Inca Trail is, and it is truly one of the greatest short treks in the world, Peru offers a vast range of trekking and mountaineering experiences that can be tailored to a groups' capabilities, both in and around the Cuzco region and further north in the wilds of the Cordillera Blanca and Cordillera Huayhuash.



Suggested Itineraries

Less than 2 Weeks

- Day 1** Depart UK, arrive Lima.
2 Fly to Cuzco; city tour and free time to acclimatise.
3 Visit to the Sacred Valley of the Incas.
4 Time for sightseeing or perhaps white water rafting on the Urumbamba River
5-8 The classic Inca Trail trek from Km82 to Machu Picchu.
9 Return visit to Machu Picchu; guided tour of site. Return to Cuzco by train.
10 Free time to relax in Cuzco.
11 Fly to Lima; Visit to Gold Museum and Depart Lima.
12 Arrive UK.

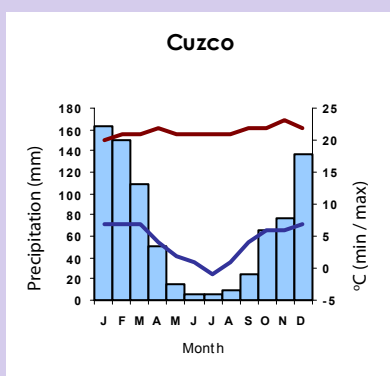
3 Weeks

- Day 1** Depart UK, arrive Lima.
2 Fly to Puerto Maldonado (Amazonia); river expedition to Tambopata Reserve; guided walks & canoes trips from lodge.

Geography & Climate

Peru is one of the most bio-diverse countries in the world, containing 83 of a possible 103 types of ecological zone. The capital, Lima, is located in the narrow desertified coastal shelf that runs almost the entire length of the country. Eastwards, the Andes rise steeply to snow capped peaks reaching over 6,000m. The range is characterised by high plateaux, deep canyons and spectacular mountain passes. The Cotahuasi Canyon in southern Peru is twice as deep as the Grand Canyon. Heading further east, the Andes give up their snow covered slopes to cloud forest, and ultimately, to the upper reaches of the Amazon.

Peru is at its best between early June and late September. During this time the weather in the mountains is characterised by clear blue skies and sunshine and the days can be warm. However, due to the altitude the nights are cold, with temperatures frequently dropping to near freezing. The main rainy season runs from November to April with the mountains often obscured in cloud, and frequent rainfall. The coastal belt, including that around Lima, is affected by cloud, fog and drizzle for much of the year.



- 3-4** Jungle exploration.
5 Fly to Cuzco; free time to relax, explore city, and acclimatise.
6 Visit to Sacred Valley of the Incas; time for sightseeing or rafting, and continue acclimatisation.
7-10 Inca Trail trek from Km82 to Machu Picchu.
11 Return visit to Machu Picchu; guided tour of site. Return to Cuzco by train.
12—16 Community project.
17 Bus across altiplano to Puno, on shores of Lake Titicaca. An often spectacular drive, scheduled stops along the route to visit some of the most interesting sites help break up the day.
18 Excursions on and around Lake Titicaca: sail to Amantani Island, spend the night in a native homestay.
19 Morning travel to mainland, afternoon return to Lima.
20 City tour of Lima, including a visit to the Gold Museum. Depart evening.
21 Arrive UK.

1 Month

- Day 1** Depart London, arrive Lima.
2 Follow the Panamerican Highway north to Huaraz.
3 Spectacular drive into the Huascaran N.P. Commence Santa Cruz trek.
4/6 Trek the Santa Cruz valley amongst remote mountain scenery. Drive back to Huaraz.
7 Drive to Chavin, Cordillera Huayhuash.
8/13 Trekking in the Cordillera Huayhuash.
14 Full day drive to Lima via Chiquian.
15 Fly Lima to Cuzco.
16 In Cuzco, city and walking tour.
17 Drive to the Sacred Valley of the Incas, visit local market town of Pisac.
18 /23 Community project, Sacred Valley region.
24 In the Sacred Valley, possibilities for rafting or mountain biking.
25 Visit Machu Picchu, train to Cuzco.
26 Train to Puno and Lake Titicaca.
27 Excursions on and around Lake Titicaca, overnight on reed islands.
28 Drive from Puno to Colca Canyon.
29 Canyon walk and Condor viewing.
30 Free morning, afternoon return to Arequipa.
31 Arequipa city tour, fly to Lima, connecting with international flight.
32 Arrive UK.

National Holidays

- Jan 1st** - New Year's Day.
Holy Week - March / April: (half day holiday on Holy Thursday, full day on Good Friday).



- May 1st** - Labour Day.
June 29th - St Peter's & St Paul's Day.
July 28th-29th - Peru's Independence.
Aug 30th - St. Rose of Lima Day.
Nov 1st - All Saint's Day.
Dec 8th - Immaculate Conception.
Dec 24th-25th - Christmas (half day on 24th, full day on 25th).

Festivals

- February and March** is Carnival time, often characterised by water fights; and foreigners make popular targets!
June 24 - The Inti Raymi festival, Cuzco.
Oct 8 - Battle of Angamos.

Price Guide

Prices vary enormously depending on the length and style of trip required, as well as the number of participants involved and date of departure. An 11 day trip to walk the Inca Trail, visit Cuzco and also the Sacred valley would start from £1,900 per person including international flights. An extended month long expedition is likely to cost in the region of £3,000 to £3,500.

Regulations & Red Tape

A full passport, valid for 6 months after your return date, is required for travel to Peru. British passport holders do not currently need a visa for stays of up to 90 days in length. However, travellers must be in possession of a return air ticket, and if entering Peru overland from another South American country a yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required.

Useful Addresses

Embassy of the Republic of Peru
52 Sloane Street, London, SW1X 9SP
Tel: 0207 235 1917
Website: www.peruembassy-uk.com

More Information

To discuss the tour and expedition possibilities that Peru offers in greater detail, and to get free, impartial advice on suitable tour operators, please contact:

The Specialist Travel Consultancy
PO Box 514, Exeter
EX1 9DW

Tel: 0845 838 7667

Email: info@thestc.co.uk

Web: www.thestc.co.uk



Images courtesy of Heather Johnson & istockphoto.com