

South America Salsa ex Lima - 49 days

go guide

don't leave home without it



A World Of Discovery



From the Pacific across the Andes to the Atlantic, this is South America at its best. On an epic journey of discovery see the fabled Inca city of Machu Picchu, the magnificent Amazon Jungle, the salt lakes of Uyuni, Lake Titicaca and Colca Canyon. After crossing the Bolivian altiplano and the marshlands of the Pantanal we witness Iguazu - the world's most spectacular waterfall, the pirate town of Parati and ever lively Rio de Janeiro



WHAT YOU SEE AND WHAT YOU GET

Trip Highlights

- Lima - free time to explore the capital's vibrant markets and spanish colonial museums
- The Nazca Lines
- Colca Canyon and Arequipa
- Sao Paulo - free time. Opt to visit the snake farm!
- Machu Picchu ruins
- Cuzco - Sacred Valley of the Incas, Pisac ruins, the temple of Ollantaytambo and local markets
- Amazon Jungle - guided tour of the rainforest, trekking and Monkey Island
- Lake Titicaca & Puno - floating reed islands, Uros islanders and Amantani island, Taquile Island
- La Paz - a colonial city. Vist the Presidential Palace or the Witches Market
- Salar de Uyuni - salt flats and unusual geography and Fish Island
- UNESCO-listed Potosi - silver mining town

- Sucre - official capital of Bolivia
- Pantanal National Park - see Piranha
- Bonito - in the Sierra do Bodoquena mountains. Go caving, boating, outdoor pursuits
- Asuncion - charming capital straddling the Paraguay River
- Parati - an old pirate town by the sea
- Iguazu Falls - viewed from both Brazil and Argentina and the Devil's Throat
- Rio de Janeiro - the party capital of the world

What's Included

- 20 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 8 dinners
- 41 nights hotels, hostels and guesthouses, 2 overnight buses, 1 overnight train, 3 nights camping, 1 overnight homestay.
- Excursions to Ballestas Islands, Huacachina Oasis, Colca Canyon, Inca Trail Trek (or free time), Machu Picchu, Sacred Valley, Amazon Jungle, Lake Titicaca, Salar de Uyuni, Pantanal, Iguazu Falls – Argentina, Iguazu Falls – Brazil
- Excursion to Pantanal National Park
- 3 day Inca Trail hike with local guide and touring of Machu Picchu
- Guided tour of Sacred Valley and Pisac ruins
- Boat trips in the Amazon and on Lake Titicaca. Guided tours of Amantani and Taquile Islands.
- Escorted by a tour leader and specialist local guides at some sites
- Relevant transport by public bus, train, boat, 4X4 and taxi.
- Economy class flights from Arequipa - Cuzco, Cuzco - Puerto Maldonado, Puerto Maldonado - Cuzco, Sucre - Santa Cruz and Santa Cruz to Puerto Suarez, Bolivia (and drive onward to Corumba in Brazil)

What's Not Included

- International flights to/from our tour start/end points and visas
- Items of a personal nature and additional meals

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Welcome to Peru!

Arrive Lima. The first day of your tour is simply an arrival day with no pre-organised activities. In order to allow time to relax and see some of the sights you may wish to add pre tour accommodation. On arrival please ask at the reception for information on when the pre departure meeting will be held.

Lima was founded by the Spanish Conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1535 after he eradicated the Incas and made the city his capital. Lima has many fine colonial buildings and some of the best museums in South America including the Gold Museum, Museum of the Inquisition and the Catacombs below the San Francisco Church. Peru's capital has much to offer and many of the sights, including the city's two main squares the Plaza de Armas and Plaza San Martin, are within easy walking distance. The Plaza de Armas houses the Cathedral, Municipal Palace and Presidential Palace where the changing of the guard can be seen every day at 12 noon. There are also many markets in Lima, possibly the best being in the central district. **Overnight - Lima**

Days 2-4 : Pisco & Nazca Lines



Lima - Pisco – Nazca - Arequipa. After a leisurely morning in Lima, we travel down the coast to Pisco, from where the Peruvian national drink, the pisco sour gets its name. The following morning we move

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along the coast to neighbouring Paracas where we take a motorboat out to explore the Ballestas Islands. The islands are teeming with over 150 species of bird life (including penguins, cormorants, boobies and pelicans), are home to thousands of sea lions and boast some amazing rock formations.

Although it is not possible to set foot on the islands, you will experience the magnificent sight and sounds of the thousands of sea lions and birds and maybe even spot seals and dolphins playing around the boat. Our boat tour also takes us past the mysterious Candelabra figure etched on the side of a mountain. Best viewed from the sea, many believe the Candelabra is linked to the Nazca Lines.

Back on shore we head deep into the desert towards the Huacachina oasis where you have the chance to try your hand sand boarding down the enormous sand dunes. It's a lot of fun, but be careful, the dunes are very steep! The brave can go for a dip in the murky lagoon which is said to have therapeutic properties.

We continue to Nazca, an oasis town famous for the strange parallel lines and geometrical figures etched into the desert floor. Although there is a viewing tower, these strange designs can only be fully appreciated from the air. You can take a fascinating flight (optional) over the lines and shapes, which include a monkey, hummingbird, condor, spider and even a spaceman. The designs are thought to have been made by three different groups of people: the Paracas (900-200 BC), the Nazca (200BC-600AD) and then new migrants from Ayacucho around 630AD. You can also take optional tours to visit the underground aqueducts, gold mines and ceramic shops. We'll have a chance to visit the extraordinary Chauchilla Cemetery where you can see the ancient mummies which still have skin and hair intact. In the evening we travel by luxury overnight bus to Arequipa. **Overnight - Pisco (1), Nazca (1), overnight bus (1)**

Days 5-7 : Arequipa & Colca Canyon



Arequipa – Colca Canyon – Arequipa. Arequipa has a lovely central plaza dominated by a large cathedral. There are some fantastic restaurants in Arequipa and it is possible to enjoy many Peruvian delicacies here. Besides the stimulating architecture, the main attraction is the Santa Catalina Convent, which is almost a city in itself with its maze of cobbled streets, cloisters and decorative buildings. Don't miss the nuns' cafe for excellent freshly baked treats!

Next is Colca Canyon, said to be the deepest in the world. En-route we travel into the high, barren Andean landscape, passing through ghost towns destroyed by earthquakes while learning about the local fauna and flora of the region. After checking in to our hotel in Chivay, we can go for a walk to the entrance of the canyon. Later in the day possibly visit the nearby hot springs for a relaxing soak.

Early the following morning travel to the Cruz del Condor (Condor's Cross) lookout point in search of the giant condors soaring out of the canyon on thermal currents. Afterwards we walk along the canyon's edge and then stop for lunch on the way back to Arequipa, we then travel by overnight bus to Nazca. **Overnight - Arequipa (1), Colca Canyon, Arequipa (1)**

Days 8-13 : Inca Trail & Machu Picchu



Arequipa - Cuzco – Inca Trail Trek (or free time) – Cuzco. After a short flight from Arequipa we arrive in legendary Cuzco, where you will be taken on an orientation walking tour of this ancient Inca capital.

Those who are trekking to Machu Picchu either following the traditional Inca Trail Trek or the Lares Trek will have a briefing to prepare for the next few days and an early departure the following morning. More information on the treks can be found on our website under the highlights section.

During your hike of the Inca Trail you will cross spectacular passes and visit more Inca ruins en-route to the Lost City of the Incas, Machu Picchu. A local guide will lead this expedition and there will be cooks and porters to carry the main equipment, leaving you with just a small daypack. The trek begins after a short bus journey and the first day is a relatively easy 4½ hour 13 kilometre walk which will get you limbered up for the highest pass at Warmiwanusca (4,200 metres) which you will reach before lunchtime on Day two (and which translates to 'Dead Woman's Pass!'). During Day two you will cover approximately nine kilometres in about 5-7 hours and after the high pass it's all down hill as the trail winds its way along old Inca stairs to our campsite. On Day three we pass the ruins of Runkurakay, Sayacmarca and Phuyupatamarca, walking approximately 15 kilometres in seven hours.

The last morning, after an overnight stop at Winay-Wayna, you will rise early for the final walk to Machu Picchu and greet daybreak over the famous "Sun

Gate". There will then be time to explore on your own or simply take in the magnificence of the place after your guided tour.

The Lost City of Machu Picchu was originally completely self-contained, surrounded by agricultural terraces sufficient to feed the population, and watered by natural springs. Located high above the fast flowing Urubamba River, the cloud shrouded ruins have palaces, baths, temples, storage rooms and some 150 houses, all in a remarkable state of preservation that will simply take your breath away.

The ruins were only discovered by the outside world in 1911, when American explorer Hiram Bingham found them while looking for another "lost city" called Vilcabamba. Due to their isolation many of the buildings are still quite intact and you can't help but admire Huayna Picchu ("Young Mountain"), which towers above the ruins. It is a hard climb to the top of the mountain (it takes about 50 minutes) but you are rewarded with spectacular views over the whole site. After spending most of the day at Machu Picchu you have the chance to soak your tired muscles in the hot springs at Aguas Calientes or meander through the markets before returning to Cuzco by train.

If you are not participating in either trek then you will visit Machu Picchu by train and have plenty of free time to enjoy the activities available in and around Cuzco.

A full day is spent visiting the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Firstly we visit the Pisac ruins, perched on a hilltop with incredible views of the snow-capped mountains. We then go down to the famous traditional Indian market of the same name, which is full of colour and atmosphere. A great place for souvenirs! After lunch, we continue along the valley to the temple/fortress of Ollantaytambo with its enormous Inca terracing constructed on the side of a steep mountain. **Overnight - Cuzco (1), Inca Trail Trek (3), Cuzco (2)** (B:3, L:3, D:3)

Days 14-16 : Amazon Jungle



Cuzco - Amazon Jungle – Cuzco. Our representative will transfer you to the airport for your flight to the jungle community of Puerto Maldonado, the starting point for our visit to the Amazon rainforest. If you choose not to visit the Amazon Jungle you will have free time in Cuzco and a portion of your tour cost will be deducted, please contact us.



In Puerto Maldonado you can pick up any last minute drinks or snacks in the busy markets and shops. The first leg of our journey is by bus followed by motorised canoe, a 35 kilometre journey along the river (approx two hours total). The canoes are very safe and lifejackets are supplied.

Arriving at the lodge located on the river's edge, you will be allocated a bungalow all of which are built from local indigenous materials. Each room is sealed by meshed netting to keep out mosquitoes and other insects. All rooms have basic private bathroom facilities. Due to the remoteness of the lodge there is no hot water and drinking water should be purchased. There is also limited electricity so please charge any electrical equipment prior to your arrival. In the evening the lodge and walkways are lit by oil lamps. Other facilities include a welcoming reception area, dining room and bar facilities. All excursions are led by English speaking local guides providing plenty of opportunity to enjoy marvelous jungle landscapes and rich diversity of flora and fauna.

After lunch we take a short boat trip across the Madre de Dios River to Monkey Island. On the way over you may spot caiman from the boat. Once on the island it is possible to see a great variety of monkeys such as the 'maquisapa', black and white 'Martins', 'Leoncito de la Selva' (Little Lions), 'Frailes' (Friars), 'Achuñis', 'Ronsocos' as well as an array of birdlife. In the evenings it is often possible to enjoy the wonderful sunset, one of the most impressive sights of the forest (weather permitting). We then return to the lodge for dinner.

After an early breakfast we will set off on a trek through the rainforest along wooden walk ways. On the way our guide will stop to show you various species of bird and explain the medicinal plants and delicate ecological systems of the Amazon Jungle. The scenery is extremely varied incorporating dense jungle as well as marsh areas. You will see incredibly big trees, several metres in diameter and around 450 years old. There is an opportunity to take a canoe ride drifting along one of the small lakes hidden away in the jungle, observing caiman and the abundant bird life. We may also catch a glimpse of the rare giant otter.

Afterwards we will enjoy the view of the lake from our viewing point/ observation platform, where you can experience the canopy wildlife such as parrots, guacamayos, toucans, camungos, shanshos, herons, turtles and caiman. We will return to the lodge for a well deserved lunch. In the afternoon we visit the Gamitana River where you can try fishing or take a dip. (All excursions are weather permitting and itineraries may be changed slightly due to local conditions).

On the final day we awake to the sounds of the jungle before departing this jungle haven and returning to Puerto Maldonado for our flight on to Cuzco, where you have the rest of the day free to explore this fascinating ancient capital. **Overnight - Amazon Jungle (2), Cuzco (1)** (B:2, L:1, D:2)

Days 17-19 : Lake Titicaca



Cuzco - Puno – Lake Titicaca – Puno. Leaving Cuzco, we'll drive along roads abundant with herds of llamas, alpacas and vicuñas before reaching the Altiplano (high plain) where our journey takes us past hot mineral pools, snow capped mountains and through villages where the locals sell food, fur hats and alpaca sweaters. At the highest point, the La Raya pass at 4,321 metres, you can see the research station for high altitude animals.

The beautiful scenery is continual all the way to Puno on the shores of Lake Titicaca, which at 3,855 metres above sea level, is the highest navigable lake in the world. We'll arrive in time so you can visit the colourful local market.

The next morning departing Puno for our overnight excursion we visit the floating reed islands in the Bay of Puno to see the Uros islanders way of life and we will have the option to ride in a traditional reed boat before continuing our boat journey to the island of Amantaní. Here we enjoy the hospitality of the local Aymara/Quechua families sleeping in their homes. We recommend you to purchase gifts for the families at the port of Puno before leaving to offer to the families – they will greatly appreciate this gesture. The next morning we visit Taquile Island, where the men stand around knitting distinctive woollen hats while the women work the fields. You can buy some of these unique handicrafts in the local cooperative shops. After lunch we board our boat for the return journey to Puno.

We travel around Lake Titicaca as we make our way towards Bolivia. After crossing the border, we continue to travel across the scenic Altiplano (high plateau) following the shores of Lake Titicaca. As we continue our journey we have breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains as the road winds its way into La Paz, the highest capital city in the world at 3,636 metres. **Overnight - Puno (1), Lake Titicaca (1), Puno (1)** (B:1, L:1, D:1)

Days 20-27 : La Paz & Uyuni Salt Flats



Puno - La Paz – Uyuni – Potosi. Built on a series of hills and considered one of the world's most beautiful cities, La Paz was established in the basin of a canyon with the snow -capped Mount Illimani in the background. Our hotel is very centrally located and is just around the corner from the city's colourful Indian street markets including the fascinating and suitably named 'witches market' where bowler hat wearing women in their flared skirts sell such items as dead cats and llamas fetuses said to ward off evil spirits. The main square, Plaza Murillo, is also within walking distance. The square still retains its colonial buildings including the Presidential Palace. La Paz is possibly the best place to experience a traditional peña show of Andean music and dance where local bands play time - honoured instruments such as zamponas (pipes) and charangos (ukulele).

There are also many optional excursions available. You might like to visit the Moon Valley with its strange rock formations shaped by the weather or take in the incredible views from Mount Chacaltaya and the world's highest ski resort at 5,221 metres. Another fantastic excursion is to the emerald green area of Coroico, the gateway to the Bolivian jungle region and a great place to see sub -tropical vegetation and plants. En route you will cross a 5,000 metre high pass before descending to 1,300 metres on narrow mountain roads bordered by sheer drops. The excursion to Coroico can also be done by mountain bike, as it is downhill nearly all the way and very exhilarating, but not for the fainthearted!

Leaving La Paz we travel to the old mining town of Oruro, an important commercial centre for the miners of the Altiplano, where we will take an overnight train to Uyuni.

The next morning we visit what is claimed to be the largest salt flat in the world, the brilliant white vast Salar de Uyuni, which covers some 10,500 square kilometres and estimated to contain 10 billion tons of salt. A 4WD excursion takes us to a hotel made entirely of salt and then surrounds you with a world of white and blue. Fish Island provides stunning views of the lake which prove quite otherworldly as giant cacti and wandering llama punctuate the scene and provide perfect photo opportunities. The fantastic contrast of the brilliant blue sky (weather permitting of course) and the pure white of the salt flats will take your breath away. We then return to Uyuni for one more night.



Please Note: Occasionally in the rainy season the salt flats become overly flooded and we may have to alter the itinerary if the salt flats are not safe to traverse. In addition the local transport timetable on this route changes frequently and this sometimes necessitates a small change to the itinerary. Your tour leader will advise as early as possible if this is likely to happen on your tour.

Travelling along scenic passes by public bus we come to the mining town of Potosí. The city was established by the Spanish in 1545 soon after the discovery of a rich vein of silver in a nearby hill, the Cerro Rico (or "rich hill"). It soon became the world's largest silver producer and silver from Potosí underwrote the Spanish economy, particularly the monarchy's extravagance, for over two centuries. In Spanish there is still a saying 'valer un potosí' (to be worth a fortune).

Millions of the indigenous population, and later, African slaves, worked in the mines in appalling conditions. You have the option to visit the mines, stopping first at the miners market to buy gifts such as coca leaves, dynamite and cigarettes. In the mines we will experience the difficult conditions in which the miners work - including 50°C heat. We'll pass several of the shrines they have made to the "Tios" which they hope will protect them while they are working in what they believe is the devil's territory. If you'd like to learn more of the historic silver industry you can take a tour of the Moneda, a museum exhibiting coins, artwork, mummies and many other interesting artefacts from Potosí's history. **Overnight - La Paz (3), overnight train (1), Uyuni (1), Salar de Uyuni (1), Potosí (2)**

Days 28-33 : Pantanel Marshlands of Brazil

Potosí - Sucre - Santa Cruz - Corumba - Pantanal. A short journey along new roads brings us to Sucre, the official capital of Bolivia, where by law all buildings are painted white. Founded in 1538 it still has much of its colonial charm intact. The city is also famous for its warm and sunny climate. Don't miss a visit to the cathedral where you can see the jewel encrusted painting of Sucre's patron - the Virgin of Guadalupe. You have the option to visit the bustling Tarabuco market where 'people watching' is as interesting as the market itself. Try some of the cooked meals in the food market if you want to sample some of the locally grown hot chillies! Local Indians are famous for their weavings and multi - coloured textiles. From Sucre we fly to Santa Cruz and enjoy some time for sightseeing.

We fly to the Bolivian border town of Puerto Suárez before travelling by road for a short trip over the border to the Brazilian town of Corumba, a port city on the Rio Paraguay and the southern gateway to the Pantanal.

The next day we enter the Pantanal National Park for sightseeing in this fantastic region. The Amazon may have all the fame and glory, but the Pantanal is a far better place to see wildlife. The area is a huge wetland in the centre of South America and is truly a birdwatchers paradise but is also home

to a multitude of other animals. The ecosystem is known to be home to at least 3,500 species of plants, 650 species of birds, 400 species of fish, around 100 species of mammals, and 80 species of reptiles, with an estimated 10 million caimans alone. Keep your eyes peeled and you may see giant river otters, anacondas, iguanas, jaguars, ocelots, cougars, crocodiles, marsh deer, armadillos, giant and lesser anteaters, black howler monkeys and zebu bulls, to name but a few! You may have to work a bit to catch your lunch, but mind your fingers or they'll be piranha stew! **Overnight - Sucre (2), Santa Cruz (1), Corumba (1), Pantanal (2)** (B:1, L:1, D:2)

Days 34-39 : Bonito to Paraguay

Pantanal - Bonito - Ponta Pora - Asuncion. Leaving the Pantanal behind us we travel to Bonito in the Sierra do Bodoquena mountains, famous for its caving and river activities. The following day is free to try some of the snorkelling activities in the lakes and rivers (optional). For those who prefer to stay on dry land, spectacular walks through the forest and mountains are on offer. After a free morning in Bonito we make a lunchtime departure for Ponta Pora, where we spend the night.

We then enter the tiny Republic of Paraguay at Pedro Juan Caballero, which you'll soon realise is the same town as Ponta Pora as there is no border as such! You simply cross the road from one country to the other whenever you like. Only the change of language will give you a hint as to which country you are in! After sorting out our immigration procedures, we travel across the Paraguayan pampas, where we might spot the South American rhea bird (a type of emu) as well as the typical cowboys, (gauchos) en route to Paraguay's capital city, Asunción.

You can shop until you drop in the city's huge duty free zone and along the riverfront are the Government and Municipal Palaces, and the cathedral. **Overnight - Bonito (3), Ponta Pora (1), Asuncion (2)** (B:5)

Days 40-43 : Iguazu Falls



Asuncion - Foz do Iguacu - Curitiba. We travel over fertile farmlands destined for the Brazilian town of Foz do Iguacu, our base for visiting the famous Iguazu Falls - the most magnificent waterfalls in the world. Unlike most other waterfalls that have just one or two cataracts, at Iguazu Falls there are 275 cataracts in a magnificent 3 kilometre long U

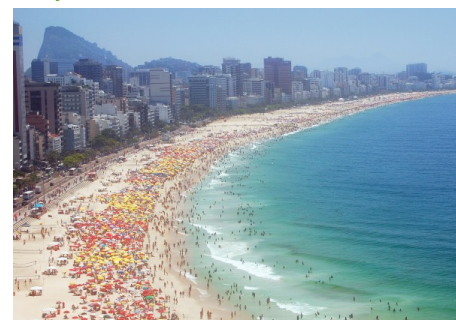
shape that we will visit from both the Brazil and Argentinean sides.

Visiting the Argentine side of the falls you can board a speed boat which will take you under the falls soaking you from head to toe, an optional adventure you'll never forget! On the Argentine side you'll also find the famous "Devil's Throat" where fourteen falls drop with such force that there is always a massive cloud of spray overhead.

Visiting the Brazilian side of the falls will give you a completely different perspective from the Argentine side. On the Brazilian side you can see the falls by walking through the rainforest and along catwalks above and below the rushing water or, for a bird's eye view a helicopter flight is on offer (optional). You can also visit the world's largest hydroelectric dam at Itaipu (optional) where you can learn more about the ecological issues faced during the dam's construction. There is also a very interesting bird park nearby, perfect for that must-have photo with a toucan!

An overnight bus takes us to the attractive university city of Curitiba. An exceptionally planned city, there are many pleasant squares and parks to wander and quite a lively nightlife. We spend the night here and there is a good hop-on, hop-off tourist bus which visits all the main attractions in the city, which you might like to join (optional). **Overnight - Foz do Iguacu (2), overnight bus (1), Curitiba (1)** (B:2)

Days 44-48 : The Road to Rio



Curitiba - Sao Paulo - Parati - Rio de Janeiro. We then visit the world's fastest growing city, Sao Paulo, which has a metropolitan population of 19 million and skyscrapers sprawling upwards and avenues spreading outwards. We can visit a snake farm and the Latin American Exhibition Centre designed by famous architect Oscar Niemeyer, who also designed Brasília, the country's capital (optional tours). After a hard day of sightseeing we can relax and perhaps have a meal in the Japanese quarter. Interestingly, Sao Paulo has the most Japanese residents outside of Japan so this is a great place to enjoy sushi. We stay in a pleasant area full of life and activity with easy access to the city by underground metro trains.

Following the stunning coastline north we come to colonial Parati, an old pirate town with streets made of stone slabs designed to let the tide wash over and clean them. You have an option to go on a full day boat cruise around the bay with plenty of



time for swimming in the turquoise waters, sun-baking on the decks and eating a fresh seafood lunch washed down by a few cold beers. Other popular pastimes here are exploring the nearby beaches and shopping in the hippy markets.

Upon arriving to lively Rio de Janeiro you'll soon find there is plenty to see and do. There are trips up Sugar Loaf Mountain by cable car and Corcovado, with its famous Statue of Christ, for great city views. Another interesting journey is on the old tram system across the viaduct into the cobblestone neighbourhood of Santa Teresa. A walking tour of Rio's historic buildings is also a lovely way to pass an afternoon, or you may like to visit the Botanical Gardens or one of the famous beaches, such as Copacabana, Ipanema or Leblon. If you are in Rio de Janeiro around February/March get ready for the world's biggest party, the Rio Carnival
Overnight - Sao Paulo (2), Parati (2), Rio de Janeiro (1) (B:5)

Day 49 : Rio de Janeiro

Our amazing cross continent adventure comes to an end today. Please confirm with the reception the check out time. If you have a late flight or have lengthened your stay by adding post tour accommodation you will have more time to explore the sights.

The itinerary listed above is to be used as a guide only. Occasionally we may need to update this Go Guide and it may be different to the information printed in our current brochure. Tour leaders may need to make adjustments due to unforeseen circumstances during the tour. It is very important that you visit our website and review a copy of this Go Guide as close as possible to your departure date in case of changes that may affect your plans.(B)

Single Supplement

If you paid our single supplement for this tour, a single room will be provided for a total of 33 nights. The evenings where a single room is not provided are as follows: day 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 19, 23, 24, 32, 33, 42, 46 and 47.

Arriving to Lima

On arrival in Lima, we recommend you change enough money into the local currency (the Peruvian nuevo sol) for the first four or five days of your trip. This is especially important if you are arriving on a Saturday night. The exchange rate at the airport is just as good as in the city centre. The bank is located on the far right as you enter the baggage claim area after passing through passport control. There is an ATM in the airport arrivals area which will give you Peruvian soles or US dollars, so make sure you pay attention when it asks you which currency you want.

Please note that ATMs in Peru do not always automatically release your credit or debit card at the time when you receive your money. Please be aware that you sometimes have to push a button to request your card to be returned. Many ATMs in main towns have instructions in English.

Airport transfer

If you have booked an arrival transfer with us (not included in your tour, offered at an additional cost) and you are going to be delayed more than two hours, you must advise us of the delay at least six hours before arrival. If we are advised in time, we will make every effort to reschedule your transfer and your driver will be asked to wait for two hours after your new expected arrival time. However, if we are not made aware of any change, the driver will only wait for two hours after the original scheduled arrival time and after this point it will be up to you to arrange transport to your hotel at your own expense. Please contact us on the emergency contact person as detailed on your voucher.

If you decide not to pre-book an arrival transfer, you can either take a taxi from one of hundreds of touts outside or arrange a taxi at one of the pre-pay taxi desks just after customs. Recommended companies include Taxi CMV and Taxi Mitsui Remise. For safety and convenience, we recommend you use the taxi desks as haggling with touts and taxi drivers can be very difficult, particularly if you do not speak Spanish. The cost of a taxi from the airport to our hotel in downtown Lima should be approximately US\$10 to \$15. The airport is approximately 30 to 45 minutes from the city centre (depending on the traffic).

Don't take unmarked taxis in Lima, and preferably don't travel alone by taxi, particularly late at night.

Start Hotel Address
The Kamana Hotel
Jiron Kamana 547
Lima, Peru
Tel: (+51) 1 426 7204
<http://www.hotelkamana.com>

The hotel is centrally located in downtown Lima, 30 minutes from Jorge Chavez International Airport.

The hotel has a 24 hour cafe next door called Koala which serves breakfast from 6am to 10am. Continental breakfast (bread, jam and tea or coffee and juice) costs approximately 7 soles and an American breakfast with eggs costs approximately 10 soles. Safes are available in each room, requiring a deposit of US\$10 and a fee of US\$2 per day.

Top tips for your arrival

The hotel has safe deposit boxes in your room for your use (you will need to get the key from reception). Important: Please leave all of your important documents, money and travellers cheques here when you go out but remember to carry some form of ID and a photocopy of your passport with you. Be careful of pickpockets everywhere, but especially on the pedestrian street Jiron de la Union.

It is not advisable not to wear chains or expensive looking watches or jewellery while in major South American cities. You should also keep your camera concealed when not in use and carry daypacks on your front for extra safety. Crime in Latin America

is not as bad as its reputation but you must be sensible and alert.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Our Partners

Please note that this tour is run in conjunction with Tucan Travel. Travellers on your trip will have made their reservation with On the Go Tours or Tucan Travel.

What to Pack

You must be prepared to carry your own bags at all times. We therefore strongly urge you to use a frameless backpack or sports type shoulder bag (or similar soft, frameless luggage) and limit your luggage to a maximum of 10-14 kilograms. It is very important that you do not bring too much luggage as you will find it extremely difficult to get on and off buses and trains etc and there is a fair amount of walking to and from hotels. You are also likely to encounter many cobbled streets and dirt roads so suitcases and luggage on wheels are unsuitable. Travel is rarely kind to luggage and you can expect your bags to suffer wear and tear during your tour.

In addition to your main bag, you will need a small daypack for your everyday things (e.g. camera, water bottle, sun cream, hat, sweater etc) while travelling, sightseeing or on overnight excursions. Try to keep this bag as light as possible and make sure that all main sections of your bags can be padlocked. Do not leave ANYTHING of value in your main luggage – keep it on you or in a safe.

Essential for all tours

- Tour Voucher and Tour Go Guide
 - Passport (with 2 photocopies - one kept separately & the other to give to the tour leader with your next of kin details)
 - Cash/ travellers cheques/ credit & debit cards (with photocopies kept separately)
 - Travel insurance certificate (with a photocopy to be given to your tour leader)
 - Spare passport photos (you may need these for obtaining visas)
 - International airline tickets (with a photocopy kept separately)
 - International Vaccination Certificate (Yellow Fever if applicable)
 - International student card (may get you discounts into some sites)
 - Your travel consultant's phone number and email address (it is very important to have this as it is much easier to confirm/ change flights etc via your agent)
 - Cotton money belt and/ or pouch to store your valuables under your clothing
- Suggested equipment (some useful, some necessary - use your discretion)**
- Sunglasses
 - Small calculator (to help with currency conversions)
 - Lockable pouch for your money and valuables to use in safety deposit boxes
 - Plastic bags (very useful for wrapping camera equipment, soap, shampoo bottles, wet clothing etc)
 - Inflatable pillow



- Small collapsible umbrella (also good for sun protection)
- Pegless washing line and travel laundry detergent (bio-degradable preferably)
- Universal washbasin plug
- Torch
- Binoculars
- Travel alarm clock
- Travel plug adaptor
- Small medical kit with diarrhoea remedy, rehydration salts, antiseptic cream, sterile dressings, plasters, bandages, pain-killers, safety pins etc.
- Small sewing kit
- Lip balm, sun block with high UV factor (this can be expensive to buy locally)
- Insect repellent (DEET 35% min) and bite cream
- Tampons and condoms
- Toilet paper (best to carry a roll with you at all times) and/or tissues (purchase locally)
- Antibacterial hand cleansing gel (the type you can use without water)
- Moistened face tissues (e.g. Wet Ones)
- Ear plugs
- Travel sickness tablets (these are usually easy to buy over the counter locally)
- Cheap plastic wristwatch
- Spare pair of spectacles or contact lenses and solution (a lens prescription is also advisable in case of loss or breakage)
- Camera /video camera with plenty of film or digital camera with spare memory cards
- Spare rechargeable batteries for camera etc
- Writing materials, address book and diary
- Pocket size Spanish phrasebook
- Travel games, cards & couple of paperbacks
- As gifts for local children - pens (with advertising on them), coloured pencils, small notepads. To discourage a begging mentality we recommend that you try to give these gifts at schools or childcare centres rather than on the street

Clothing & Foot wear

All clothes should be lightweight, durable and easily washable. Please do not bring any military or camouflage-style clothing as it can be dangerous to wear and occasionally illegal. Everybody ALWAYS packs too much, so rather than bringing lots of chunky sweaters, wear clothing in layers when in the colder regions. Nights can be cold at higher altitude so it is a good idea to bring at least one pair of warm trousers or jeans plus several thinner sweaters/ fleeces which you can layer (note: it is very easy to buy extra sweaters/ jumpers locally).

Check the climate and altitude at www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour. We do not feel that it is necessary to include a full packing list as you will know what you need depending on the duration of your tour. However we do recommend that you bring the following:

- A lightweight water/windproof jacket with hood
- Easy to pack wide-brimmed hat or cap
- Sarong - very useful as a beach towel, bag, hat, shawl and wrap around
- Towel
- Swimwear

- Sandals/flip flops

It is also ESSENTIAL that you have good, comfortable shoes that are suitable for walking and trekking. These don't need to be expensive boots, but they should have good ankle support and grip, be worn in and ideally waterproof.

Personal Safety

It is not advisable to wear chains or expensive looking watches or jewellery while in many Central American cities. You should also keep your camera concealed when not in use and carry daypacks on your front for extra safety. Crime in Latin America is not as bad as its reputation but you must be sensible and alert.

Health

Please see your doctor or travel clinic for an up to date list of all recommended vaccinations for the regions you will be travelling to. We recommend that you do this at least eight weeks before you travel, as you may need a course of medications or more than one vaccination. In general we recommend that you are vaccinated against Tetanus-diphtheria, polio, hepatitis A and Typhoid and if travelling to a jungle area, yellow fever. Vaccinations are solely the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.

The malarial risk varies in the regions of South America and in some areas appropriate preventive medicines are needed. Measures should always be taken to avoid mosquito bites, such as nets and creams. Please check with your health care professional as to the best and most up to date remedy for this mosquito borne disease.

It is not recommended that you drink the tap water in any of the countries we visit and we recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that quite often we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc.

Welcome Meeting

The address of your start hotel can be found on your tour voucher. On arrival you should look for a Tucan Travel information sheet and welcome note on the hotel notice board where you will find details of the pre-departure/welcome meeting. The tour leader or a representative will normally hold the pre-departure meeting early in the evening of day one (assuming that all travellers have arrived by then). You will be briefed about the tour, given an outline itinerary for the next few days and any questions will be answered. After the meeting there is usually an option for everyone to go out for dinner and drinks to start to get to know one another.

Please note that you will need to bring the following items to the pre departure meeting:

- The original copy and a photocopy of your passport
- Vaccination certificates (if required)
- Travel voucher

- Details of your travel insurance policy number and their 24hr emergency contact number

Hotel & Transfers

Day 1 of all our tours is simply a joining day and the tour actually departs the joining city on day 2. The last day of your tour is the official departure day and is free for you to pack or sightsee before you depart. All tours are scheduled to arrive at your final destination the afternoon/evening before your departure day. Therefore very little time is spent in each of the starting and finishing cities and you will need to allow a few days at the beginning or end of your tour if you want to explore them further. This is particularly important for passengers joining tours in high altitude cities (Quito & La Paz) so that you can rest and acclimatise before the tour begins. We can book pre and post tour accommodation for you upon request.

Check in time is at 1300 hrs on day 1. If you wish to use the services of a room before or after checkout time, or you are arriving very early in the morning of day 1, you will need to book an extra night, which we can arrange for you. All rooms are on a bed only basis unless otherwise indicated.

Airport transfers in joining and departing cities (except where indicated in the What you Get section of this Go Guide) are not included in the tour price but can be booked upon request at an additional cost. Please see the tour price page of our website for information on prices.

Important: If you have booked an arrival transfer with us and you are going to be delayed more than two hours, you must advise us of the delay at least six hours before arrival. If we are advised in time, we will make every effort to reschedule your transfer and your driver will be asked to wait for two hours after your new expected arrival time. However, if we are not made aware of any change, the driver will only wait for two hours after the original scheduled arrival time and after this point it will be up to you to arrange transport to your hotel at your own expense. Please contact us on the emergency number on your tour voucher.

Optional Excursions

During your tour there will be free time to enjoy a range of optional excursions which are listed at the end of this pdf. Your tour leader will be able to make recommendations and bookings in advance for most of these activities so you have more flexibility and control over your itinerary. Please note that you may not have time to do all of the optional excursions listed. Should you wish to partake in optional activities in the city where you tour starts/ ends, please check there is sufficient time to do so or alternatively consider booking pre/post tour accommodation.

Tipping

Although tipping is not a natural part of many Western cultures it is expected in South America, where many workers are very poorly paid and depend on tips for their main income. The local people work very hard to provide a good service



and this is due in part to the tips they have received from foreigners in the past. However all tips are at your own discretion and you should not feel obliged or pressured to tip at any time – particularly if you feel that the level of service was not up to standard.

As a general guideline a gratuity of 10% of the total bill for your waiter is recommended in restaurants. You should be aware that prices on the menu often exclude service charges but they are added to the bill (10%) and local taxes (anywhere between 2% and 20%). If it is included then you are not expected to pay an additional tip, although this is still appreciated. Some restaurants have a 'cubiertos' (cover charge) which is normally added onto the food section of the bill, not the total, so watch out for this when dividing the bill with other group members.

It is customary to tip your local guides on both included and optional excursions. As a guideline, we recommend US\$3-5 per person for a half/full day excursion. Your tour leader will generally pass around an envelope for the local guide on included excursions. The tour leader will indicate on the envelope the amount of the tip usually given per person to the guide.

This information is given as a guide as many travellers are unsure how much to tip. Should you wish to give the local guide your tip personally and not with the group tip then please feel free to do so.

Inca Trail and Lares Trek - the commonly accepted combined tip for guides, porters and cooks on the Inca Trail or Lares Trek is US\$30 per trekker. This amount will be collected from each trekker by the tour leader and distributed amongst the Trail team usually at the last dinner.

Tips are also appreciated by your tour leader at the end of your tour. This, however, this is only if you feel that their service was up to standard and is completely at your own discretion. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture.

Spending Money

Spending money – allow approximately US\$25-\$30 per day to cover meals, snacks, drinks, limited souvenirs, laundry, tips and any extras.

Style of Tour

Our South America tours are designed to suit travellers who love being able to travel on many different forms of transport with local people. There is a certain amount of involvement needed, which will mean carrying your own bags to the bus or train station or even helping the driver throw everyone's packs onto the roof. If you enjoy meeting and interacting with local people and don't mind roughing it occasionally, then these tours will be just right for you.

It is important that you are open to travelling with a range of different age groups. You must also satisfy yourself that you are fit enough to complete the itinerary as there are no refunds if you choose to leave the tour. Based on the nature of this travel style, our adventurous South America tours are

generally suitable for people aged between 18 and 60 years old. If you have any questions about this please contact us or speak to your travel consultant.

Our South America tours suit people who are fit and active. On all of our tours, (with the exception of our Patagonia Discovered and Incas, Amazon & Argentina tours) there are many walks between bus/train terminals and hotels and travellers must be able to carry their own luggage over various terrains as well as lift up luggage onto the tops of buses so do not pack more than you can comfortably carry.

The average group size is 8 to 12 passengers with a maximum of 18, however on some included excursions group sizes may occasionally be larger.

Our **Patagonia Discovered and Incas, Amazon & Argentina tours** offer a higher standard of accommodation and transportation. Our hotels are rated as comfortable and are generally of a 3 star standard. Some nights are also spent at jungle lodges, homestays and tented camps. Transportation for road journeys on these tours is offered aboard our custom-designed, comfortable Mercedes Benz vehicles. Our travellers enjoy the fact that the same vehicle that drops them off of an evening is the same vehicle that is ready and waiting for them at the hotel in the morning.

On average there are between 15 and 20 people on our these tours, with a maximum of 34. In Cuzco, Peru and on some included excursions this number may be larger. Our expedition vehicles are designed to comfortably suit these maximum numbers with plenty of leg room and storage space. Many Tucan Travel tours form part of a modular system, therefore group numbers may fluctuate at times. This is a great opportunity to meet an even more diverse range of people.

Meals

On our South America tours meals are included in remote areas such as the Amazon Jungle excursion and on the Inca Trail or Lares treks. Most other meals are not included which gives you the flexibility to choose when and where you eat. Our tour leaders have a wealth of knowledge regarding local restaurants and can advise you of the best places to try the delicious and varied local cuisine.

Transportation & Travel

On all of our South America tours we use a variety of transportation. Vehicles can range from buses filled with local people and their many possessions (N/A for Patagonia Discovered and Incas, Amazon & Argentina tours) to our private minibuses and comfortable air-conditioned coaches. Sometimes you could be travelling on boats, trains, aircraft, ferries, colectivos, pick up, private shuttles trucks, boats, dugout canoes, and taxis. Most bus transport is very comfortable, often with reclining seats.

Our aim is not simply to get you from A to B, but to help you to experience each destination as a genuine traveller, not as a first class tourist. A word of warning - please remember that travelling conditions can sometimes be cramped.

Due to the vast distances covered on many of our South America Tours, please be prepared for occasional long travelling days. This time spent travelling is unavoidable but you will not be disappointed once you arrive! On the positive side there are also many short travel days and days which involve no travelling leaving you free to explore at your leisure.

Accommodation

Our 'simple' accommodation is generally the equivalent in comfort and amenities of a 2 star hotel. We stay in small hotels, hostels and guest houses which are usually situated close to the main sights and town centres. They are chosen for their local ambience rather than star rating and we look for attributes like character, location, atmosphere, cleanliness and security. Although sometimes quite basic, you will find clean comfortable rooms with ensuite facilities (occasionally bathrooms may be shared but this is rare), friendly staff and often a bar and restaurant attached or nearby. Please be aware that accommodation in South America sometimes has erratic services like lack of hot water or no central heating, staff members don't always speak English and sometimes our reservations are 'lost!' In general, facilities are very good but please be prepared for the occasional mishap, which is all part of the travelling experience.

When staying in the Amazon Jungle or on Amantani Island accommodation is rustic and offered on a shared basis. Whilst trekking the Inca trail or Lares Trek we sleep in tents, which also are offered on a shared basis.

All accommodation is included from the arrival day until check out time on the final day of the tour. Travellers will share rooms with other group members of the same gender. Mostly this will be in twin rooms although sometimes in triples depending on the group composition and hotel rooming structure.

On our Patagonia Discovered and Incas, Amazon & Argentina tours accommodation comprises of small friendly hotels and guest houses which are usually conveniently located near the town centres and sights. We try to ensure that each hotel has plenty of local character to give you a taste of life in the country in which we are travelling. They are usually family run and are chosen for their location, cleanliness, security and accessibility for our vehicles.

Comfort hotels are generally the equivalent of a 3 star hotel and may include amenities such as cable television, swimming pools, restaurants, elevators, internet access, room service, hair dryers and English-speaking reception staff. These hotels may also take the form of a lodge or tented accommodation.

Standards may vary due to local conditions but our preference is mid-range comfortable rooms with ensuite facilities. Please be aware that hotels sometimes have occasional erratic services such as a lack of hot water or no central heating, and staff members don't always speak English.



Travellers will share rooms with other group members of the same gender. Mostly this will be in twin rooms although sometimes in triples depending on the group composition and hotel rooming structure. When staying in the Amazon jungle in Peru, accommodation will be in rustic ensuite cabins with cold water only and mosquito nets will be provided. On Amantani Island we stay in mud-brick houses and we stay in two-person tents on the Inca Trail Trek. In the Torres del Paine National Park we stay in campsites where your tent is erected for you. All accommodation is included from the arrival day until checkout time on the final day of the tour.

Electricity Supply

The power supply varies from country to country and can also vary from region to region within a country. If bringing electrical equipment, make sure that it can be switched over from 110 volts to 220 volts and vice versa. If your equipment is 220 volts it will work on a 110 volt system (albeit slower), but if you use 110 volt equipment in a 220 volt system, it will blow the equipment! Bring a voltage converter and travel plug adaptor (most countries either have 2 pin flat as in USA or 2 round pins).

Bolivia Country Guide

Bolivia - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Bolivia
- Capital: La Paz (administrative), Sucre (judicial)
- Population: 8.4 million
- Total Area: 1.1 million square kilometres
- Official Language: Spanish, Quechua and Aymara
- Religions: Roman Catholic 95%
- Voltage: 110 volts in La Paz and 220 volts in the rest of the country
- Dialling Code: +591
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -4
- Airport Departure Tax: US\$25

Bolivia - Visas

Citizens of the EU, Canada and Australasia do not need a visa to enter Bolivia. Entry is granted on production of a passport valid for more than six months, a return air/bus ticket and proof of funds to support yourself for the duration of the stay. Many other nationals, including US citizens do require visas. For the latest information on your specific visa requirements you should contact the local Bolivian Embassy or Consulate well in advance of your planned date of travel.

Bolivia - Climate

Nicknamed the 'Tibet of the Americas', landlocked Bolivia is the highest and most isolated country in the Americas. With elevations ranging from sea level to over 6,880 metres, the Bolivian landscape offers a mind blowing array of complex ecosystems and stunning scenery. It is basically divided into three regions: Altiplano (a plateau at an average of 4,000 metres above sea level, 800 kilometres long and about 130 kilometres wide); the yungas

(a series of forested and well-watered valleys); and the llanos (the Amazon-Chaco lowlands). Because of the wide range of elevations and topography, there are many different climatic patterns. The overall temperatures are probably cooler than most people expect. Even in the humid forest regions of the north, frosts are not unheard of. Bolivia's unprotected expanses contribute to variable weather conditions and the two climatic 'poles' are Puerto Suarez for its stifling, humid heat, and Uyuni for its near-Arctic cold and icy winds.

There's no time that is perfect for the entire country, but December to March is when most of the rain falls. La Paz is always cool to cold at night, so be prepared with sweaters and windbreakers. La Paz can get quite warm during the day but sometimes mists swirl through the streets and the city can be literally wrapped in the clouds. Throughout the country, night temperatures drop dramatically, and on the high Altiplano, when a cloud passes over the sun, the temperature plunges noticeably. In Cochabamba, Sucre and Tarija, winter is the time of clear, beautiful skies and optimum temperatures. The lowlands experience hot sunny days and an occasional shower to cool off and settle the dust.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Bolivia - Money

Important

In Latin America you will have problems changing the US\$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not to bring them. In some countries banks won't even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President's face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local currency

The monetary unit in Bolivia is the boliviano (often referred to as the Peso), which is divided into 100 centavos. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com. Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Bolivia, however very large sums should be declared on arrival.

There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins – you may sometimes be offered sweets, cigarettes or even razor blades as change!

When arriving at the La Paz El Alto International Airport we suggest that you change some money at the bank ("Cambio") in the main terminal building. Change enough money to see you through the first few days of your tour – particularly if it is a weekend. Please note you can only change cash (not traveller's cheques) at the Cambio.

There are ATMs in the city where you can get money out 24hrs a day.

Bolivia - Local Transport

Most of La Paz is easy to visit on foot, although the high altitude can take its toll, especially when walking up hill. There are various types of buses and minibuses which are very cheap but you will need to know which routes to use (ask at the hotel reception for assistance). There are also fixed route taxis "trufis" which are "colectivos" (meaning other people will be on-board). You can tell these taxis apart by their red number plates. We recommend the use of taxis at night as they are fairly cheap and much safer than walking. It is not common, however, for taxis to have meters so you will need to barter for a good price. In other Bolivian towns and cities walking is basically the best and cheapest way to see the sights.

Bolivia - Food & Drink

Food

In Bolivia the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and possibly a little salad. The Bolivian national dish is the parillada, a mixed grill with everything meaty including offal and intestines. Sajta de pollo is hot spicy chicken with onion, fresh potatoes plus dehydrated potatoes called chuno, lomo ala pimiento is a pepper steak popular with travellers, fricase is juicy pork with chuno, silpancho is bread-crumbed meat with fried eggs, rice and banana, saice is a dish of mince meat with spicy sauce and potatoes, rice, onions and tomatoes and milanesa is beef or chicken breaded and fried like a schnitzel. For a simple fish, you should ask for pescado which can be grilled, pan fried with breadcrumbs apanado or served with a sauce. Trout trucha is especially good from Lake Titicaca. Typical snacks include empanadas, pasties filled with cheese, humitas (maize pies), pucacapas (spicy cheese pies) and saltenas (meat or chicken pasties which you can get super spicy or mild). Much of Bolivia's food is not too hot and spicy but you will find a bowl of aji (which is a chilli or hot pepper sauce) on most tables which can be added to spice things up.

In most of the larger cities and towns you will find an array of international cuisine. There are pizzerias on every corner and Chinese (chifas) food is very common. A cheap, filling 3 course lunch (normally called a comida del dia) can often be had for about US\$1.50.

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. You might find that you are eating a lot of omelettes and other egg dishes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals in the campsite, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a



guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water - US\$0.60
- 30cl bottle of soft drink - US\$0.50
- 30cl bottle of beer - US\$1
- 50cl bottle of beer - US\$1.50

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water and carbonated soft drinks are widely available and are generally safe to drink. Plastic sachets of flavoured chocolate and strawberry milk are also available.

In Bolivia some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be a bar within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available but usually at a high price. If you are happy to drink the local spirits then there is an array of rums and singani (distilled grapes). Imported Chilean and Argentine wine can sometimes also be found cheaply. A bottle of rum could be as little as US\$5 in a local shop and quite often the mixer to go with it (Coke) is more expensive. There are various brands of beers including Pacena, Ducal and El Inca (dark sweet stout).

Brazil Country Guide

Brazil - Fact File

- Official Name: Federal Republic of Brazil
- Capital: Brasilia
- Population: 176 million
- Total Area: 8.5 million square kilometres
- Official Language: Portuguese
- Religions: Roman Catholic 80%, Protestant 15%
- Voltage: Brazil has a variety of electrical voltages, sometimes within the same city and outlets often accept a range of plug types. For this reason, many hotels and campsites will label their outlets to make sure guests know what type of power they use. If an outlet lacks a label, this information will often be listed in the hotel services guide. If in doubt, you should check with reception before plugging in an appliance.
- Dialling Code: +55
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -2 to -4. For other time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com
- Airport Departure Tax: none

Brazil - Visas

Citizens of most Western European nations, including the UK and Ireland, need only a passport valid for six months and either a return or onward ticket, or evidence of funds to pay for one, to enter Brazil. An entry card must be filled in on arrival to obtain a tourist permit allowing you to stay for 90 days. Australian, USA and Canadian citizens must obtain visas in advance and a return or onward ticket is usually a requirement. Do not lose the carbon copy of the entry card the police staple into your passport on arrival, as you may be fined

on departure if you don't present it. A sensible precaution is to photocopy it and keep it separate from your passport. Visa requirements do change periodically so you should check for the latest information on your specific visa requirements with your local Brazilian embassy or consulate well in advance of your planned date of travel.

Brazil - Climate

Brazil can be split into four distinct climatic regions. The coldest part - in fact the only part of Brazil which ever gets really cold - is the South and Southeast, the region roughly from central Minas Gerais to Rio Grande do Sul. Here, there's a distinct winter between June and September, with occasional cold, wind and rain.

The coastal climate is exceptionally good and the 7,000 kilometres of coastline, from Paraná to near the equator, bask under a warm tropical climate. There is a winter, when there are cloudy days and sometimes the temperature dips below 25°C, and a rainy season, when it can really pour. In Rio and points south the summer rains last from October through to January, but they come much earlier in the northeast, lasting about three months from April in Fortaleza and Salvador, and from May in Recife. Even in winter or the rainy season, the weather will be excellent much of the time.

The average monthly temperature in the northeast doesn't ever dip below 25°C and the interior is semi-arid. Rain is sparse and irregular, although violent. Amazonia is stereotyped as being steamy jungle with constant rainfall, but much of the region has a distinct dry season from July to October. Check the weather chart on our website or visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your trip.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Brazil - Money

Important

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The monetary unit in Brazil is the real, which is divided into 100 centavos. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. Visa, Diners and American Express are the best credit cards to bring (Mastercard is not common in Brazil), however there can be problems at times getting money out

from ATMs, so make sure you have sufficient cash for emergencies.

There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Brazil, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins.

When arriving at the Rio de Janeiro International Airport we suggest that you get some reals at one of the little banks in the terminal building or use one of the ATMs (as you come out of customs, take the escalators (to the right) to the top floor then go left and right to the end passing through the shops you will find about three ATMs together). Change enough money to see you through the first few days of your trip – particularly if it is a weekend.

Brazil - Local Transport

Much of Rio can be visited by bus or metro (although the latter doesn't really cover many of the tourist sights). The buses are fast (remember, every Brazilian wants to be a motor racing driver, well at least the bus drivers), reliable and cheap. They are easy to use as you get on and pay the conductor who sits in a little booth then pass through a turnstile. Beware of thieves and pickpockets, especially before you pass through the turnstile.

Taxis are relatively cheap and we recommend using them at night. Most taxis have meters and you should insist that the driver switches it on.

In other Brazilian towns and cities walking is basically the best and cheapest way to see the sights (with the exception of Sao Paulo where the metro is the best way of getting around the city).

Brazil - Food & Drink

All meals are included when camping and lunch is included on travelling days in the truck. When staying in hotels lunch and dinner is at your own expense. (All hotels in Brazil include a buffet style breakfast, normally bread, cold meats, hams, cheese, fruits, juice, tea or coffee). As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US\$0.70, a light meal will cost around US\$2-3, and a main meal with a couple of beers will cost around US\$8. You will find that meals are generally much cheaper than you are accustomed at home but obviously this does depend on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks which will certainly increase the bill. Eating out in upmarket suburbs like Ipanema or Leblon in Rio will be more expensive.

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

Generally you will find that meals are much bigger than you are used to and, in many cases, one main meal will serve for two. Quite often the waiter will even suggest that two of you share it.

Food



In Brazil the basic diet focuses on meat and black beans. The favourite national dish, especially on Saturday lunchtimes is "feijoada". This consists of several meats (sausages, pork etc) in a delicious stew cooked with black beans and "farofa" (manioc flour). This is normally accompanied by neat chachaca which will blow your head off at first but then become very mellow.

A 'churrasco' at a typical Churrascarria (BBQ) restaurant is another typical dish but go there with an empty stomach as you will get so much food. Every type of meat you can think of is served on giant swords and waiters wander around topping up your plate every few minutes. These restaurants also have great salad bars with lots of variety where you can help yourself as many times as you wish.

If you like fish ask for 'peixe' which can be grilled, pan fried with breadcrumbs or with a sauce. There are also plenty of chicken ('frango') dishes which are a good idea if you don't like your food too salty (the beef normally comes very salty indeed).

Typical snacks available in lanchonetes and roadside truck-stops include 'empadao' (pasties with chicken or meat), 'empadas' (fried version of the latter), 'coxinha' (pear-shaped deep fried manioc flour with fish or chicken), 'pão de queijo' (hot roll made with cheese) and 'salgados' (savoury pastries).

For a cheap and hearty meal try the fixed priced 'prato feito' or 'sortido'. While at the 'comida por kilo' you pay by the kilo which is usually very good value.

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular you will just have to search a little harder for the restaurants that cater to your tastes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals in the campsite, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water - US\$0.50
- 30cl bottle of soft drink - US\$0.30
- 30cl bottle of beer - US\$0.50
- 50cl bottle of beer - US\$0.80

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water and carbonated soft drinks are widely available and are generally safe to drink. Surprisingly, although Brazil is one of the largest coffee producer in the world, most coffee in cafes and restaurants leaves a lot to be desired, so look out for a specialist coffee type cafe. For great fresh fruit juices ('sucos'), try the 'lanchonetes' where you can also get great snacks.

In Brazil some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be one within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available, but at a much higher price. There is an array of locally made rums, whiskeys, gins, vermouth, campari and cachaca available cheaply. The latter is a sugar-cane liquor which is used in the Brazilian national drink 'Caipirinha' (a mix of cachaca, sugar, crushed ice and slices of squashed limes). Another variation is the 'Batida' which is cachaca mixed with a variety of fruit juices, crushed ice and sugar. There are various brands of beers including Brahma, Antarctica and Cerpa. Draught beer is called 'chopp'.

Peru Country Guide

Peru - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Peru
- Capital: Lima
- Population: 28 million
- Total Area: 1.3 million square kilometres (twice the size of France)
- Official Language: Spanish, Quechua and Aymara also spoken in places
- Religions: Roman Catholic 90%
- Voltage: 220 volts. Sockets are a mixture of the European, two-pronged round variety and US flat-pin.
- Dialling Code: +51
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -5. For other time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com
- Airport Departure Tax: US\$30.25

Peru - Visas

Currently EU, US, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand citizens can visit Peru for up to 90 days (ask on arrival for a 90 day entry as 30 days is the standard issued) without a visa. However, the situation does change periodically, so you should always check with your local Peruvian embassy before departure. All nationalities need a tourist or embarkation card ('tarjeta de embarque') to enter Peru. This is issued at frontiers or on the aircraft before landing. Tourist cards are usually valid for between 60 and 90 days (60 for US citizens). In theory you have to show an outbound ticket (by air or bus) before you'll be given a card, but this is rarely checked. For your own safety and freedom of movement, a copy of the tourist card together with a copy of your passport must be kept on you at all times - particularly when travelling outside of the main towns. You must also retain this card for when you exit Peru.

Peru - Climate

Peru is unique in its wide variety of ecosystems ranging from the driest/hottest desert in the Americas, to the high Andean peaks (over 7,600 metres above sea level); and a two-thousand-kilometre-long belt of cloud forest, rich in flora and fauna, to a vast area of lowland Amazon jungle, covering more than half the country. The three main zones of Peru are known as La Costa (the coast), La Sierra (the mountains) and La Selva (the jungle).

Over the last few years, the Peruvian weather has been rather unsettled possibly as a result of global warming. However, it still rarely rains on the coast, although the Lima region does experience substantial smog, coastal fogs or mists and even drizzle; particularly between the months of May and November.

The climate in the Sierra and Selva regions can be divided into a wet season (November-April) and a dry season (May-October). There is, of course, some rain during the dry season, but it is much heavier and much more frequent in the wet season. Don't be put off by the expression "rainy season" however, as this normally means a couple of downpours each day rather than continuous rain. Again, weather conditions have been quite unsettled in these regions over the last ten years or so, with the Altiplano zone, around Puno, being affected by serious droughts, which have left the water level of Lake Titicaca at its lowest for years.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Peru - Money

Local currency

The monetary unit in Peru is the nuevo sol. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. For more information about the best way to carry your money please see the Pre departure information (which will be sent to you with confirmation of your booking). There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Peru, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins.

Change enough money to see you through the first few days of your trip - particularly if it is a weekend. Please note you can only change cash (not travellers cheques) at the Cambio and there are other ATM's in the city (and in Arequipa, Cuzco and Puno) where you can get money out 24 hours a day.

Important

Please note that ATMs in Peru do not always automatically release your credit or debit card at the time when you receive your money. Please be aware that you sometimes have to push a button to request your card to be returned. Many ATMs in main towns have instructions in English.

Peru - Local Transport

Taxis are recommended for all journeys within a city. In Peru, taxi meters are not normally in evidence, so you will find yourself engaging in a bit of haggling with the driver to agree upon the fare. It is a good idea to find out in advance, from your tour leader or the hotel receptionist, approximately how much the fare should be. It will also help if you can speak a few words of Spanish. You will almost



certainly have to accept that you will pay more than the locals do.

Local buses are very cheap to use, but you really need to be able to speak reasonable Spanish to get by. There are also some bus stops/stations, especially in Lima, that are not recommended for tourists.

Peru - Food & Drink

All meals are included when camping and lunch is included on travelling days in the truck. When staying in hotels all meals are at your own expense. As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US\$0.70, a light meal will cost around US\$3-\$6, and even a meal in one of the best restaurants in Cuzco or Lima costs very little in comparison to what you would expect to pay at home (usually around US\$20-\$30). Obviously this depends on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks which will certainly increase the bill. In cheaper restaurants where Peruvians and backpackers eat, you can get meals for as little as US\$1.50.

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water US\$0.70
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US\$0.50
- 30cl bottle of beer US\$0.70
- 50cl bottle of beer US\$1.00

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer.

Food

In Peru the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and possibly a little salad. Soups are also common and good value. Coastal dishes are seafood based and include 'ceviche' which is fish marinated in lemon juice, onion and hot peppers traditionally served with corn on the cob, cancha (toasted corn), yucca and sweet potatoes. 'Escabeche' is fish with onions, green and red peppers, prawns, cumin, hard boiled eggs, olives and sprinkled with cheese. The most common fish is 'corvine' (sea bass) which can come simply grilled or fried or with sauces. 'Chupe de camarones', a prawn stew, is another delicious dish certainly worth trying.

Corn and potatoes are Peru's main vegetables – particularly in the highlands. 'Causa' is a dish made from yellow potatoes, lemons, peppers, hard-boiled eggs, olives, lettuce, sweet corn, sweet potato, cheese and onion sauce. 'Choclo con queso' is a large corn on the cob snack with very salty cheese. Other local favourites include 'tomaletes' which is like a boiled corn dumpling filled with chicken and wrapped in banana leaf and 'lomo saltado' which is a kind of stir-fry beef with tomatoes, onions, fried potatoes on a bed of rice.

An interesting local speciality is cuy (pronounced: cooe). This is roasted guinea pig which some people say tastes like chicken, others, like cooked cardboard.

In most of the larger cities and towns you will find an array of international cuisine. There are pizzerias on every corner and Chinese (chifas) food is very common. In places like Cuzco even Indian and Japanese restaurants have now opened. A cheap, filling three-course lunch (normally called a "menú económico") can often be had for about US\$1.50.

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular particularly in south Argentina. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives for included meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

In Peru some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be a bar within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available but usually at a high price. If you are happy to drink the local spirits then there is an array of rums, pisco (white brandy) and even palatable wine. All these are very cheap, e.g. a bottle of rum could be as little as US\$5 in a local shop. Quite often the mixer to go with it (Coke) is more expensive. There are various brands of beers including Cuzqueña, Arequipeña, Cristal and Pilsener.

The soft drink of choice in Peru and a source of national pride is the bright yellow Inca Kola. Possibly an acquired taste, but indisputably popular. So popular in fact that McDonalds forced Coca Cola to allow it to be sold in its Peruvian branches.

The origins of pisco - a grape-based spirit - is keenly contested between Peru and Chile. Regardless of origin it is the national drink of Peru (the fact that the town Pisco is in Peru lends credence to Peru's claim). Drank in a variety of ways, the most iconic is the pisco sour, which has a raw egg amongst its ingredients.

Peru - Bugs

If your tour includes a visit to a jungle region you should be prepared to encounter an array of wildlife – including many insects and spiders etc. Most creepy crawlies are completely harmless and will cause you no problems at all – in fact this is all part of the jungle experience. If you find something in your room it certainly doesn't mean that the room is unclean – rather that you are in the jungle and it is completely normal. If you are uncomfortable with creepy crawlies it is a good idea to bring plenty of insect repellent spray and coils to place in your room and of course don't leave any food lying around.

Paraguay Country Guide

Paraguay - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Paraguay
- Capital: Asuncion
- Population: 6 million
- Total Area: 406,741 square kilometres
- Official Language: Spanish and Guarani
- Religions: Roman Catholic 90%
- Voltage: 220 volts.
- Dialling Code: +595
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -4.
- Airport Departure Tax: US\$18

Paraguay - Visas

New Zealand, Australian, USA and Canadian citizens must obtain visas in advance (before the tour starts).

As there is no Paraguayan embassy or consulate in New Zealand, travellers must arrive in the starting city early (make sure it's a week day) in order to obtain a Paraguay visa before the tour starts.

Most consulates will issue Paraguayan visas in one day. Make sure you have three passport photos, proof of onward travel such as an airline ticket (plus copies) and a copy of your tour itinerary, proof of sufficient funds (bring original credit card as well as several photocopies if possible), several photocopies of your passport and US\$45 cash for single entry (all Tucan Travel tours which include Paraguay only require a single entry visa). You will usually have to pay the fee in US dollars, but sometimes local currency at the current bank exchange rate is expected (such as in Rio de Janeiro).

If it is impossible for you to obtain your Paraguay visa before the tour starts your tour leader will do all they can to help you get it whilst on tour. If this is not possible, your only option is to try to obtain a 24-48hr transit entry stamp at the border. Although this transit visa is often granted without problems we do not recommend you rely on this method to obtain your visa. If you find you have exhausted all possible ways to obtain a visa you would need to go ahead of the group and meet up with them a night later in Brazil (your tour leader will give advice if this scenario becomes necessary).

Paraguay - Climate

The Paraguayan summer is from October to May and during this time you are guaranteed summer heat. 40°C temperatures and over are quite common. Even during the winter, temperatures do not normally drop below 20°C (although it can get cooler).

Rainfall is distributed fairly evenly throughout the year. In the east, near the Brazilian border, it averages about 2000 millimetres per year.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.



Paraguay - Money

Important In Latin America you will have problems changing the US\$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is better not to bring them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President's face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local currency

The monetary unit in Paraguay is the guarani. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

Paraguay is one of the only countries in Latin America where you will also be able to exchange other currencies (such as Euros, pounds sterling and yen). Exchange offices are generally open 9am to 5pm, whereas banks will close at midday. We recommend that you exchange money at the exchange offices (casas de cambio) rather than the banks, as the rates are as good as the banks and the system less efficient. You may, however, get a cash advance on some credit cards from the some of the banks if you bring your passport along and are prepared to wait in a long line. Always make sure you ask to see if what you want to do is possible before lining up.

You can sometimes pay for purchases with credit cards in Asuncion. Visa is the most widely accepted credit card, although other cards are becoming better known. Note that shops will often give you better discounts if you pay with cash rather than credit card.

One of the easiest ways to obtain money is to use ATMs ('cajeros automaticos'). Visa, Plus and Cirrus / Maestro international cards are accepted in many Asuncion ATMs, as long as you have a four-digit pin. Visa cards are definitely the most widely accepted (both debit and credit). Your tour leader will advise you which ATMs tend to be better for international cards. Some machines give more money than others, and some give you the choice of getting US dollars OR guaranies. It's often a good idea to stock up on US dollars in Paraguay to assist you in the other countries you'll be going to. This can be done by using the ATMs or by changing traveller's cheques into US dollars (usually with a 3% commission).

Remember that once out of Paraguay you will generally not be able to use or exchange Guaranies ever again (except at the border towns). Therefore you must make sure you spend/exchange/donate any left-over money before leaving the country!

Paraguay - Local Transport

Much of Asuncion can be visited by local bus. The buses are reasonably reliable and very cheap. They are easy to use as you get on and pay the driver in local money - usually about G1500 (US\$0.25) per trip. As always, beware of thieves and pickpockets.

Taxis are not terribly cheap in Asuncion (relative to other costs in Paraguay), but we still recommend using them at night. Most taxis have meters and you should insist that the driver switches it on.

Paraguay - Food & Drink

As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US\$0.70, but if you choose to go to a nice café a sandwich will cost about US\$3. A main meal with a couple of beers will cost around US\$6-\$7.

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

Food

The typical Paraguayan diet consists of mostly meat and starchy foods such as pasta, rice, corn products, and Yucca/Manioc root foods. The most typical snack in Paraguay is the chipa which is made with manioc flour, eggs and cheese. They are sold everywhere, and are extremely cheap and filling. Empanadas (patties filled with chicken, cheese or meat) are another typical snack found at every corner stall.

You will also find a lot of western-style foods in the capital, Asuncion. There are numerous international restaurants – particularly Asian and European style restaurants. You will also find the typical Churrascaria (BBQ) restaurants which are common to Brazil. These restaurants serve delicious cuts of meat and also have great salad bars with lots of variety where you can help yourself as many times as you wish (sometimes the price is 'per kilogram').

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular particularly in south Argentina. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives for included meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

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- 1 litre of water US\$0.60
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US\$0.50
- 30cl bottle of beer US\$0.70
- 50cl bottle of beer US\$1.00

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer. Argentina also has some of the best coffee in the world.

Paraguayans consume massive amounts of mate (ma-te) a herbal tea, usually as ice-cold terrere (very sweet, iced mate) and often spiked with medicinal herbs. Sugar-cane juice is also common (called mosto). Local beers such as Baviera are excellent, but we don't recommend the local wine.

Stick to Chilean or Argentine wine, as it's far superior. Due to the strong Spanish influence, Paraguayans do love their sangria.