

Peru & Iquitos Amazon Cruise

11 days | Lima to Lima



Delve deep into the Amazon Rainforest in northern Peru on a luxury 4 day cruise, searching for three-toed sloths, toucans and endangered pink dolphins. Travel onwards to the majestic 'Lost City' of Machu Picchu, explore the Sacred Valley and meet the islanders of Lake Titicaca on this 11 day tour.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Amazon Cruise - explore the most famous jungle on Earth in style on a 4 day luxury cruise
- Spot wildlife on a jungle walk across suspended bridges deep into the high Amazon rainforest and go fishing for piranhas
- Swim, canoe or kayak in the Amazon's Yanayacu-Pucate River looking out for the legendary pink river dolphins
- Machu Picchu - discover the "Lost City" of the Incas high in the mountains and gaze at the fantastically preserved settlement
- Cusco - enjoy a guided tour of Cusco's main highlights, including the bustling Plaza de Armas, once the heart of the

Incan Empire and the renaissance style Cathedral

- Lake Titicaca - marvel at the floating reed islands of the Uros people who have maintained their traditions and culture for centuries
- Sacred Valley - barter at the Pisac markets, marvel at the Inti Watana ruins and visit the ancient fortress of Ollantaytambo

What's Included

- 10 breakfasts, 8 lunches and 3 dinners
- 7 nights superior hotels (deluxe available on request)
- 4 day/3 night luxury Amazon cruise aboard the deluxe Aria Amazon Cruiser. Design suite with en suite bathroom. All Inclusive with soft drinks and premium selected wines and beer
- Services of local English-speaking specialist guides
- Airport arrival and departure transfers on days 1 and 11
- Return Vistadome train to Machu Picchu
- Perurail Lake Titicaca train to Puno
- All Amazon off-boat excursions led by expert bilingual naturalist guides. Use of sports equipment for excursions including kayaks and bikes
- Full day Sacred Valley tour, half day Cusco city tour, guided tour of Machu Picchu and full day Lake Titicaca motorboat excursion on a shared

basis (private touring available for a supplement)

- Entrance fees

What's Not Included

- International flights and visa
- Domestic flights: Lima - Iquitos, Iquitos - Cusco and Puno - Lima. South American airpasses are available with LATAM and other airline carriers when booked in conjunction with international flights, can offer significant savings on domestic flights. Please ask a member of the team for more information.
- Items of a personal nature, additional meals and drinks
- Tipping – an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Lima

Bienvenido a Peru! Welcome to Lima and the beginning of your Peruvian adventure. You'll be transferred to your hotel to enjoy the rest of today at leisure. Perhaps explore the historic city centre and see the Government Palace - the seat of power in Peru. **Overnight - Lima**

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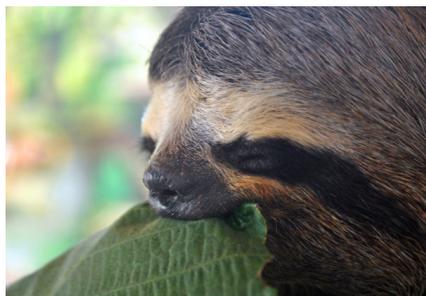
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Day 2 : Iquitos Amazon cruise



Lima - Iquitos (Amazon). This morning you'll fly to Iquitos, gateway to the Peruvian Amazon. Explore the historic port city and meet an indigenous Amazon community before you board the luxurious Aria Amazon cruise ship for the start of your three night jungle cruise. After settling in, enjoy delicious Amazonian cuisine created by Chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino, whose restaurant is one of the top-ranked in Lima. **Overnight - Amazon cruiser** (B, L, D)

Day 3 : Amazon cruising



Today you'll explore the Amazon's Yarapa River in skiffs – small local boats. Look out for Amazonian wildlife including tropical songbirds, black collared hawks and sloths. Fish the river for ferocious piranhas and learn about the Amazonian ecosystem from your guide. As darkness falls, enjoy an evening stargazing on the waters of Nauta Cano. **Overnight - Amazon cruiser** (B, L, D)

Day 4 : Exploring the Amazon



Catch the sunrise today and explore a 'lost river' along the Marañon River, the mainstem source of the Amazon. Then take a walk through the deep jungle and across suspended bridges high in the trees. You'll have the opportunity to swim, canoe or kayak in the Yanayacu-Pucate River and may even spot rare pink river dolphins. In the evening, use hi-tech telescopes to identify planets and constellations in the night sky. Back onboard the Aria Amazon, spend the evening at leisure listening to the chorus of noise produced by the Amazon wildlife at night. **Overnight - Amazon cruiser** (B, L, D)

Day 5 : Manatee Rescue Centre



Iquitos - Cusco. Early this morning you'll visit the local market in the town of Nauta, where your guide will identify the day's fish catch and the region's local fruit. Return to the Aria Amazon for breakfast before you disembark and visit the Manatee Rescue Centre - a fantastic facility where orphaned manatees are rescued, rehabilitated and eventually released back into the wild. Discover the important work the centre does and come face to face with this extraordinary creature. Following a stop at the San Juan craft market, bid farewell to the Amazon and transfer to the airport where your onward flight will take

you to the ancient city of Cusco. **Overnight - Sacred Valley** (B, L)

Day 6 : The Sacred Valley



Enjoy a scheduled full-day tour of the Sacred Valley today. The tour begins at the famous Inti Watana ruins at Pisac, which include the Temple of the Sun, baths, altars, water fountains, a ceremonial platform, and an inti watana - a volcanic ritual stone used as an astronomic clock or Inca calendar to define the change seasons. Continue to the bustling Pisac markets and barter with the local merchants for their colourful textiles and souvenirs.

The next stop is the famous Inca fortress of Ollantaytambo, constructed to protect the entrance of the valley from invading jungle tribes. The archaeological site includes a series of superimposed terraces and stunning finely carved stone blocks located on the upper terrace or Temple of the Sun. Explore the ruins and take a stroll through Ollantaytambo, which is known as a "live Inca town" because inhabitants still live according to customs and traditions inherited from their ancestors. **Overnight - Sacred Valley** (B, L)

Day 7 : Machu Picchu



This morning, take a picturesque train journey through the Andean highlands to the town of Aguas Calientes, before you travel by bus up

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to Peru's most famous site, Machu Picchu - the spectacular "Lost City" of the Incas. Peru's Spanish invaders never discovered the city, and it was forgotten by humanity until its rediscovery in 1911. The Incan builders of this extraordinary place left no written records, and the mystery surrounding the city adds to the beauty of the site. Your guided tour will explore the incredibly preserved Main Plaza, the Sacred Sun Dial and the mysterious Royal Quarters. Following your tour, return to Cusco by train and transfer to your hotel. **Overnight - Cusco (B, L)**

Day 8 : Cusco city tour



Explore the ancient city of Cusco on a half day guided tour this morning, visiting famous sites including the beautiful Santo Domingo church, the 17th century cathedral and the Plaza de Armas - former heart of the Incan Empire. Then explore the impressive Sacsayhuaman Inca fortress, which offers a wonderful panoramic view of the city. Visit the ruins of the Qenqo Amphitheatre, Tambomachay and Puka Pukara. The afternoon and evening are free for you to explore Cusco further at leisure. Consider exploring the neighbourhood of San Blas, home to many artists and sculptors or visit the Chocolate Museum to learn about the history of chocolate production in Peru.

Overnight - Cusco (B)

Day 9 : Puno by train



Cusco - Puno. Travel to Puno by train, passing through scenic countryside as you travel towards Lake Titicaca, stopping at several sightseeing spots on the way. From here you'll be transferred to your hotel on the shores of majestic Lake Titicaca - the highest navigable lake in the world. **Overnight - Puno (B, L)**

Day 10 : Lake Titicaca



An early start will be rewarded with an exciting motorboat excursion across the waters of Lake Titicaca to the island of Taquile, inhabited by Quechua-speaking natives. The 2,200 inhabitants of this island have developed unique social systems, and you'll see their fine hand weaving techniques, which have been passed down through the generations. The boat will then take you to the peninsula of Chucuito where you'll enjoy traditional cuisine at the rural Aymara community of Luquina, on the banks of Lake Titicaca.

The final stop on your full day excursion will be the floating reed islands of the Uros. The ancient inhabitants of these islands have built them almost exclusively from Tortora reeds, which grow only around Lake Titicaca. As well as living on them, the Uros use these reeds to build their homes and their boats, and they even eat them.

Overnight - Puno (B, L)

Day 11 : Lima

Puno - Lima. Today your Peruvian adventure comes to an end. You will be transferred to Puno's Juliaca airport for your flight to Lima.(B)

HOTELS

The hotels listed below are ones which we frequently use on this tour. We reserve the

right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard when necessary.

Aria Cruise

Designed by innovative Peruvian architect Jordi Puig, this cruise boat offers a luxury experience on the waters of the Amazon. Its suites are set across the first and second decks and feature polished timber flooring with a wall of floor to ceiling glass facing the river. Amenities include individual air conditioning and ensuite bathrooms with rain showers and the latest eco-sensitive technology. Guests can enjoy Amazonia-inspired cuisine in the dining area, as well as generous lounge areas, a massage room, observation deck and an outdoor Jacuzzi.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Peru Country Guide

Peru - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Peru
- Capital: Lima
- Population: 30 million
- Total Area: 1.285 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\$31

Peru - Visas

Currently, EU, US, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand citizens can enter Peru without a visa for up to 90 days (on arrival ask for 90 days as the standard issued is 30 days). As this

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situation changes periodically, we advise you check with your local Peruvian embassy prior to departure. All tourists will be presenting with a tourist card to enter Peru, which will be issued to you by your airline before landing and will be stamped by an official upon arrival where you will also be asked to present a return ticket or proof of funds for your stay and return ticket. This must always be kept with you throughout your stay in South America (as per Peruvian law, everyone must carry some form of ID at all times) – especially when travelling outside of main towns and cities. You must also retain this card for when you exit Peru (this is a big deal, if you lose it, you can't leave & must go through all sorts of bureaucracy - which takes days). Take a copy or a digital photograph copy.

Peru - Climate

Peru is split into three main zones – the coast, the mountains and the jungle, all boasting different climates. From the driest hottest desert in the Americas, to the Andean peaks, to the lowland Amazon Jungle, each zone offers different seasons.

It rarely rains along the coast; however, the capital does experience a substantial amount of smog, coastal fogs and even drizzle, particularly between the months of May and November.

The mountains and the jungle regions can be divided into wet season between November and April and dry season between May and October. During dry season there can be some showers however it is not as heavy or as frequent. Rainy season normally means a few downpours a day rather than continuous rain.

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

US dollars are used and accepted for payment in Peru, especially in tourist areas however we recommend you always carry some local currency where you can as you are more likely to get preferable exchange rates. There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency you can bring into Peru however large sums must be declared on arrival. We recommend

keeping a small supply of small denomination notes and coins as there is usually a lack of small change.

Traveller cheques are also better exchanged in US dollars. Banks will usually accept and exchange traveller's cheques however it can be trickier and a much slower process than when in Lima.

We recommend you change enough money to get through the first few days of your trip – especially over a weekend. Please note you can change cash at the Cambio or withdraw money from an ATMs in the capital (as well as Arequipa, Cuzco and Puno) where ATMs are open 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 must push a button to request your card to be returned. Many ATMs in main towns have instructions in English.

Peru - Local Transport

We recommend using local taxis for your journeys in Peru, especially outside of main cities. Taxis do not usually have meters, so the fare must be agreed with the driver beforehand. Be sure to ask the hotel reception or your tour leader for a rough guide of the price so when you start your negotiation with the drivers you know how much the fare should be. It also helps if you speak some Spanish to help you however please expect to pay more than the locals do.

Local buses are also available and cheap to use however you really do need to speak reasonable Spanish to get by. There are also bus stops, especially in the capital where tourists are recommended to avoid.

Peru - Food & Drink

Peruvian cuisine is known for its hot and spicy nature which comes from the classic mix of garlic and hot pepper that we have come to celebrate abroad. Due to the diversity of the Peruvian landscapes, the country enjoys a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

The basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, (however be prepared to see some exotic meats such as guinea pig on offer) accompanied by rice, chips and salad.

Specialities along the coastal regions include 'Cerviche', raw fish marinated in lemon juice, with onion and hot chillies. Another local speciality is 'Cuy', roasted guinea pig served whole and accompanied with yucca and potatoes.

In the highlands, diets focus on potatoes and vegetables, with the country producing over 2000 kinds of cultivated and indigenous potatoes there is an array of variety. 'Causa', a dish made from yellow potatoes, lemons, eggs, sweet potato, cheese and onion sauce. 'Tamales' boiled corn dumplings wrapped in banana leaves and filled with meat are another local favourite.

In most larger cities and towns, you will find an array of restaurants offering international cuisine. Chifas (Chinese restaurants) are very common in Peru, as well as Italian pizzerias, Japanese and Indian restaurants have begun to open however we also recommend trying the 'menu del dia' in local restaurants for a cheap authentic meal.

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. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives for included meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

Please note that drinks will be at your own expense throughout the duration of the tour. Most hotels we use will either have a bar onsite or within walking distance. Imported spirits and beers are available but at a higher price. There are also local drinks available including 'Pisco' clear brandy distilled from grapes.

'Inca Kola' is the country's soft drink of choice, so popular that MacDonaldis had to allow it to be sold in Peruvian branches due to exceptionally high demand.

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

Peru - Bugs

If your tour includes a visit to the jungle region, we advise that you prepare yourself

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to encounter an array of wildlife including insects and bugs etc. Most creepy crawlies are harmless and will not cause problems at all. If you do find any in your room, it doesn't mean that the room is unclean, just that you are in the jungle and its completely normal – if anything it's part of the jungle experience. If you do not like creepy crawlies we recommend plenty of repellent spray and coils to place in your room.