

Peru Trip Report - The Gringo Trail

By Linda and Chuck, s/v Jacaranda

July 9 - August 3, 2013

In General:

Peru is approximately twice the size of the state of Texas, with a population of almost 30 million people. It is located in the equatorial area of South America, but its climate does not correspond to its geographical location for two fundamental factors, the Andean Mountain Range and the cold marine current of Humboldt, also called Peruvian current. Due to this climate change the sun only comes out 30% of the year in the months of December to March.

Money and Prices:

Almost all prices listed here for buses and museums are regular fees; if you are 65 or over, ask for “tercer edad” or “jubilado” discounts for seniors (buses, museum fees, etc.)

Exchange rate: \$1 dollar = 2.78 soles (<http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>)

Use cash for the best prices/discounts - you will need small bills! VISA is the credit card of choice and many places do not take anything else. You will be charged an extra percentage (5% maybe up to 10%) to use your credit card. You will find ATM's almost everywhere throughout the country and withdrawals are what we prefer to do - ATM's usually limited the amount of money you could withdraw at one time but you could often do up to 3 withdrawals. The upper limit in the most liberal bank (Banco Central of Peru or BCP) was s/700 or about \$250 (commission 13.50).

Getting There: We left Jacaranda moored at Puerto Amistad (\$330/month) in Bahia de Caraquez and took a bus to Guayaquil. The bus was Reina del Camino. We then flew on TAME airlines to Lima for \$331 per person one way.

Itinerary: Lima (4 days), Cuzco (3 days), Sacred Valley (1 day), Aguas Calientes (2 days), Machu Picchu, Cuzco (1 day) , Puno (3 days), Lake Titicaca, Arequipa (2 weeks), Colca Canyon (2 days), Arequipa (2 days)

Resources/Extra Reading about Peru

http://edition.cnn.com/2013/05/29/travel/peru-10-things-to-know/index.html?iid=article_sidebar
PromPeru <http://www.peru.travel/en/>

<http://perutravelsource.com>

<http://perudelights.com/about/> (Peruvian food)

Getting There - Flew from Guayaquil to Lima on TAME for \$332 per person 4 hours and 25 minutes through Quito (left at 4:05 pm and arrived Lima at 8:30 pm.) LAN was \$504 per person.

LIMA (elevation is sea level; Miraflores District is 295 feet)

The Capital of Peru on the Pacific seacoast. Size of Rhode Island and contains 1/3 Peru's population.

Historic City Center designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, 1988

Although severely damaged by earthquakes, this 'City of the Kings' was, until the middle of the 18th century, the capital and most important city of the Spanish dominions in South America.

Lima is the gastronomic capital of South America - pisco sours and ceviche, yum!!! Not to mention the cuy (guinea pig), alpaca steak, and anticuchos (grilled beef hearts) washed down with a bottle of urine-yellow Inca Cola or chicha morada. The best food we had since we left Mexico!

A word of caution when walking around Lima - cars do not give way to pedestrians so be careful when crossing streets!

Hotel

511 Lima Hostel: Miraflores

Av. de la Aviacion 175

Double room with private bath incl. breakfast - \$60

Wonderful and fairly new "boutique" hostel; Owners Humberto (young lawyer) and Gonzalo (young chef) treated us like family. It's a fun young crowd. The breakfast is pretty minimal but there is a wonderful bakery/cafe right across the street where we often augmented breakfast and got lunch, snacks. The location is a few blocks from the Malecon and Parque Kennedy - but you do walk a lot to get around.

\$855 + 5% for credit card (+ \$42.75 = \$897.75) = s/2495.75

Shops and Museums

Larcomar - Miraflores: mall with typical shops but incredible site on a cliff overhanging the Pacific Ocean (the #2 most visited tourist attraction in Peru after Machu Picchu).

The main shopping street, Av. Larco, stretches out from here but also stroll the small side streets, like the Calle Alcanfores or Av. La Paz with beautiful small shops.

Artesanias Las Pallas - Barranco district: Cajamarca 212;

Exceptional place for the highest quality crafts! You'll find it all here - no need to go anywhere else for traditional handicrafts from all over Peru.

Artisan shop/ home/museum owned for many years by the incomparable Mari Solari.

Highest quality crafts hand-picked and curated by Mari, a warm Welsh woman who has lived in Peru for over 30 years. Her home and heart are open to all visitors. Give a pat to her Peruvian Viringo (hairless) dog.

Museo Larco - Pueblo Libre: <http://www.museolarco.org>

Av. Bolivar 1515, Pueblo Libre; entrance \$12/person

There are many good museums in Lima but don't miss this one - two rooms of erotic ceramic pottery, Incan headdresses and gold treasures - and a museum rarity, you get to see their storage room. There is also a very nice restaurant (we had lunch here) and a few shops (on the expensive side but quality selection).

Indian Market - Miraflores: Av. Petit Thouars (block 52 to 54), starting just one block from the Ovalo Miraflores (Miraflores Roundabout). Famous markets with arts and crafts gathered from around the country.

Manos Peruanas - Miraflores: Jr. Comandante Juan Moore 199, Miraflores, Lima, Peru;
51-(0)1-430-0910
Crafts Museum and store

Other sites

Historical Center: Plaza de Armas (don't miss the catacombs in the Church of San Francisco) and Plaza San Martin

"Huaca Pucllana" (200 A .D.) - a pre-Inca archaeological site within Lima itself ; has a good restaurant inside the site. Archeologists were actively doing a dig.

Barranco District and Puente de los Suspiros - walking around is great on the colorful side streets of this bohemian neighborhood; good nightlife with live music

Miraflores - Walk along the Malecon with its stunning vistas, past popular Lover's Park and the Glider port while you watch the surfers below; See Parque Kennedy and the resident cats.

Restaurants - (Lima is the gastronomic capital of South America - amazing food and fantastic cevicherias; real foodies should try to get to the Mistura Food Festival in Sept.)

Danica - Miraflores: Av. Armendáriz 524, Tel. 445-8743 / 446-2135; <http://www.danica.pe>
Italian/peruvian fusion. This was Gonzalo the chef's (one of the owners of 511 Lima Hostel) choice of restaurants for our Goodbye Dinner together. There were 9 of us but the meal was good and reasonably priced.

Astrid and Gaston - Miraflores: Cantuarias 175; <http://astridgaston.com/en/>
Gaston Acurio is Peru's most famous chef with an international reputation. Very Expensive. Besides the regular menu, there is a dramatic 24 course tasting menu called The Journey (\$432 with wines for 2) which I've heard is "over the top". He has restaurants in Cuzco and Arequipa also. We ate at both of those but not the one in Lima (way out of our budget).

Pescados Capitales - Miraflores: La Mar 1337; <http://www.pescadoscapitales.com>

The name is a play on words of the “Capital Sins”. Excellent Seafood/Cevicheria (and there are a lot of good seafood restaurants in Lima). Highly Recommended. Bit pricey. I loved the clever and poetic menu playing off the seven sins.

La Rosa Nautica -Miraflores: Espigon 4 Circuito de Playas;<http://www.larosanautica.com>
Splendid location on a pier jutting out into the Pacific below the cliffs of Miraflores.
Good seafood at this famous landmark eatery. Pricey.

Canta Rana Restaurant - Barranco: Genova 101:
Lunch on our bike tour - cute cafe full of locals; not expensive

Supermarket - Vivanda - upscale supermarket - not a cheap place to shop but the selection and quality are great

Tours

Lima Walks (Ronald Elward)
<http://limawalks.blogspot.com> - \$12/person
Unusual walking tours which we love - not your typical sites.
Excellent.

Bus Tour
City Sightseeing Hop on Hop Off
3 hours starting at Larcomar Mall - \$25/person
Hits all the City's typical highlights - a must do to get oriented

Bike Tour (Claudio)
Ride Along Lima Tours and Rentals - \$34 includes 3 districts and lunch
Av. de la Aviacion 175
We loved this tour of Miraflores, Barranco and Chorrillo districts along the malecon.
Claudio is a real sweetheart and his office is in 511LimaHostel.
(511) 444 0808 / (511) 972976098
info@ridealonglima.com
<http://www.ridealonglima.com/>

Resources

Off the Beaten Path:
<http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g294316-s403/Lima:Peru:Off.The.Beaten.Path.html>

Three Days in Lima: (great itinerary)
http://www.tripadvisor.com/Guide-g294316-l222-Lima_Lima_Region.html

Walking Tours:

[http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g294316-c121869/
Lima:Peru:Walking.Tours.In.Lima.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g294316-c121869/Lima:Peru:Walking.Tours.In.Lima.html)

<http://www.limaeeasy.com>

Time.com - Travel - City Guides - Lima

By LUCIEN CHAUVIN, 2013

http://content.time.com/time/travel/cityguide/article/0,31489,1977548_1977464,00.html

[http://www.time.com/time/travel/cityguide/article/
0,31489,1977548_1977534_1977515,00.html#ixzz2kGhgVZW8](http://www.time.com/time/travel/cityguide/article/0,31489,1977548_1977534_1977515,00.html#ixzz2kGhgVZW8)

Getting there: From Lima to Cuzco, we flew TACA Airlines on July 13 - \$182/per person one way. About and hour and a half flight (9:55 - 11:20 a.m. flight)

CUZCO - (elevation 11,152 feet) - You're in the Andes now! (and you'll feel it). Drink that coca tea and take it easy to acclimatize! If you want you can buy sorochi (altitude sickness) pills in any pharmacy - whether they really work or not???? (Some of us took them and some didn't and no one got sick except for the 2 who were prone to migraines - each had a bad headache one day). Read more about altitude sickness here: <http://goperu.about.com/od/healthandsafety/a/Altitude-Sickness-In-Peru.htm>. Stay for 3-4 days

Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, 1983

Cuzco developed, under the Inca ruler Pachacuteq, into a complex urban centre with distinct religious and administrative functions. It was surrounded by clearly delineated areas for agricultural, artisan and industrial production. When the Spaniards conquered it in the 16th century, they preserved the basic structure but built Baroque churches and palaces over the ruins of the Inca city.

We are DIY travelers but there are many travel agencies and you can easily make plans to go to Machu Picchu, Sacred Valley or Puno (Lake Titicaca) through an agent.

Hotel

Ecopackers- - www.ecopackersperu.com

Santa Teresa 375

Clean and friendly. We had a double room which had a much appreciated heater and private bath with hot water. Our 4 boys stayed in the dorm which didn't seem to have much of either. Good bargain and location.

Double room with pr. bath and breakfast - s120 (\$43)

Royal Hotel Inka -

Santa Teresa 335

Stayed here one night on our return from MP since Ecopackers was full and it was close by (July 18)

Double with breakfast - s/200 (\$72)

Hotel Rumi Punko - Friends stayed here calling it “ a delightful hotel with many terraces, good breakfasts and convenient location.” A few blocks from the Plaza de Armas.

Double room is \$100 including breakfast. <http://www.rumipunku.com/english/index.html>

Things to do:

Explore the Plaza de Armas, walk down Loreto alleyway, explore the San Blas neighborhood (picturesque with winding steep streets), impressive ruins of Sacsayhuaman (pronounced Sexy-woman); San Pedro market.

Restaurants

(Food Resource: <http://www.cuzcoeats.com>)

Chicha - One of Gaston Acuario's restaurants (Gaston Acurio is Peru's most famous chef with an international reputation). There's one in Lima as well as Arequipa. Good but over-rated we thought.

Pacha Papa (San Blas neighborhood) - Plazoleta Plaza San Blas 120, across from the church - Highly recommended

Nuna Rayme - Ca Triunfo 356 int 02

Lunch - s/97 with tip lunch for 6

Shopping

Centro de Textiles Tradicionales del Cuzco - non-profit with beautiful high-end textiles made the traditional way (often there are women weaving on backstrap looms, wearing traditional dress in the store). Also has a lovely small exhibit of traditional regional dress with photos.

Mercado San Pedro - Plazoleta San Pedro - central market

Sacred Valley Tour - north of Cuzco, a destination in its own right

Picturesque Rio Urubamba Valley, Incan ruins, famous markets, agricultural terraces, small Andean towns. Yes, it's a valley but not a whole lot lower in elevation than Cuzco.

We took a private van from Cuzco for a day trip since there were 6 of us and we wanted to do it at our own pace. But there are plenty of tour buses available from Cuzco travel agencies. Market at Pisac, Ollantaytambo (elevation 9,160 feet), Chinchoro (loved the church, had a weaving/dying demo), lunch in Urumbamba. Consider buying a Tourist Ticket (boleto turistico) to save on entrance fees to archeological sites. There are several possibilities to see the Sacred Valley, including staying overnight in Ollantaytambo either on the way up or back from MachuP. One friend highly recommended staying at El Auberge - <http://www.elalbergue.com/en/>

Getting there: From Cuzco - You can ask your hotel or a travel agency in Cuzco to make arrangements for you. We took the option of taking a bus to Ollaytaytambo and then a 2 hour train ride to Aguas Calientes. Since we went in high season, the recommendation is to book this round trip as early as possible.

To do it yourself: we booked it all online at Perurail.com - a very good website. Tickets are about \$60 one way per person for the cheaper option, and you must also provide them with your passport number. You must present the credit card you used at an official Peru Rail office to receive your actual tickets that you reserved.

The train ride is wonderfully scenic, paralleling the Inca Trail for part of the way. You will also see some Incan ruins along the way. Sit on the left hand side going to Aguas Calientes if you can.

Aguas Calientes (elevation 7,953 feet)

Calling itself Machu Picchu Pueblo, this shabby Gateway to Machu Picchu is beautifully located along a river in a gorge. Spend the night.

Hotel

El Mistico Hostal Machu Picchu - www.machupicchumistico.com

Pachacuteq Ave. Mz - 19 Lote 12; 5184-211-051

At the high end of the town close to the hot springs (a bit of a schlep from the train station. Our room overlooked the river and the sound of gushing water was very soothing.

Hot Springs - (s/10 per person entrance fee) - rent a towel from one of the tiendas near the entrance.

There are plenty of places to buy cheap rain ponchos if you don't have one.

Restaurants

A town full of bad pizzerias.

Tree House - Jr. Huancaure 105 - http://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Restaurant_Review-g304036-d1483621-Reviews-The_Tree_House-Aguas_Calientes_Sacred_Valley_Cusco_Region.html

An absolutely wonderful surprise to find such gourmet cuisine! The restaurant is behind the main square, behind the municipal building, off a small street, and up a steep flight of alley stairs near the Rupa Wasi hotel. It may not be so easily found but it is worth searching for!

El Indio Feliz - Lloque Yupanqui 4-12, <http://www.indiofeliz.com>

French/Peruvian; very nice. On an alleyway off of one of the main streets not far from the Main Square. Set dinner menu was s/59.

Hot Springs Pizzeria II - Av. Imperio de los Incas #109 - if you have to eat pizza, eat here. But the best advice is not to eat at any place that serves pizza or burgers!

Machu Picchu - (elevation 7,970 feet)

Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu, designated a UNESCO site, 1983

Machu Picchu stands in the middle of a tropical mountain forest, in an extraordinarily beautiful setting. It was probably the most amazing urban creation of the Inca Empire at its height; its giant walls, terraces and ramps seem as if they have been cut naturally in the continuous rock escarpments. The natural setting, on the eastern slopes of the Andes, encompasses the upper Amazon basin with its rich diversity of flora and fauna.

We ordered our train tickets on line at perurail.com. Since we were traveling during high season, we took the advice and ordered as far in advance as possible. You will need passport numbers to do this. The backpackers train is fine - no need to pay more for the dome car unless you want to. We had to take a bus to Oll where we boarded the train to AC - there was not rain service directly from Cusco. From Ollantambo to Aguas Calientes, the best views are on the left hand side of the train. We purchased our entry tickets and bus tickets when we arrived in Aguas Calientes.

Take one of the earliest buses to get to MP for sunrise - we were at the bus at 5:30 a.m., waiting in line for the short drive up to the entrance. You can also walk from town if you want (about 2 hours?). You can also buy a return ticket to AC from MP if you didn't buy a roundtrip ticket earlier. We hired a guide when we got to the entrance. There are plenty milling about and supposedly they are all authorized and sanctioned with licenses that they wear hanging around their necks. We enjoyed our guide and thought it very worthwhile to hire one. Since he was just fr our group, we didn't feel like we were rushed and moved along at our own pace. You can also do it on your own without a guide.

When you enter the site, there are steps going up on your left. This leads to the spot where everyone takes those iconic photos of themselves with MP in the background.

You are not supposed to bring food or beverages into MP but we did bring our lunch and packed it out. You can return to the entrance and eat there although it is expensive.

Dress in layers, comfortable hiking shoes, hat. Bring insect repellent (biting flies) and sunscreen .

Getting there - We took a tourist bus tour from Cuzco to Puno that we arranged through the tour agency in the Ecopacker Hostal; the bus took all day (9 hours) but stopped at about 5 different tourist attractions along the way.

Puno and Lake Titicaca (elevation 12,500 feet) - keep pumping that coca tea.
Stay for 2-3 days.

Take a boat tour to the islands (a few hours plus lunch)
Isla Amantani and Isla Taquile are stunning and located at a crazy elevation. The Uros Reed island culture and how the islands are made are really fascinating - even if you end up at one of the tourist islands rather than the few authentic ones that are left.

Writeups/guides- <http://www.ruba.com>

Hotel

Punuypampa Inn - Calle Lima 787 on the corner of Calle Cajamarca; +51-51-352881;
<http://punuypampa.com/en/>

Double with buffet breakfast - \$70/night

Good location a block from the Main Square and on the Cajamarca pedestrian street....and the hotel is heated!!

Intiqa Hotel - friends stayed here and said it was nice and convenient.

Museum

Museo Municipal Carlo Dreyer

s/15 per person

Enjoyed this little museum in an old historic building

Restaurants

La Casa del Corregidor - Cafe next to Museo Carlo Dreyer with a nice courtyard had good coffee.

La Casona Restaurante
Jr. Lima 423
(our goodbye dinner with the boys on July 21)
Very Expensive!! - s1008 for the 6 of us (\$70 each with tip).

Boat tour on Lake Titicaca - to see the Uros reed islands and Taquile Island.
A friend reports: Edgard Adventure trip to visit the islands-to learn about their old ways of life and see the real reed people. Only 2 islands left. The other reed island next to Puno is touristy. Here you can take a boat trip to Bolivia and back.

Getting there: From Puno to Arequipa, we took a Cruz del Sur bus on July 22- s/59 per person.

It left Puno at 15:00, stopped in Juliaca, left Juliaca at 16:00.

Arequipa (elevation 7,740 feet)

Called the "White City" - UNESCO site, 2000

The historic centre of Arequipa, built in volcanic sillar rock, represents an integration of European and native building techniques and characteristics, expressed in the admirable work of colonial masters and Criollo and Indian masons. This combination of influences is illustrated by the city's robust walls, archways and vaults, courtyards and open spaces, and the intricate Baroque decoration of its facades.

Hotel

La Casa de Silla
Rivero 504
www.thecasadesillar.com

Phone: 28-4249
Double with private bath (incl. breakfast) - S70
We stayed in two rooms #1 (on first arriving) and #4 (after our return from Colca Canyon); We liked #4 better
We only had wifi outside of our room and sat on a bench in the garden or the lounge to access it. We liked the location and it was a good bargain for an old stone mansion.

Casa de Avila
Av. San Martin 116, Vallecito
www.casadeavila.com

Phone (54) 213177- (54)200015
Cooking Experience s/28.00 www.peruviancookingexperience.com
“Cultural souvenir” they call the cooking class.

We stayed here after our return from Colca Canyon because I was taking the cooking class. Fantastic large sunny garden with tables and comfy chairs and the staff (and owner) were incredibly friendly - remembering your name and making you feel at home and giving you personalized service.

Casa de Mi Abuela - friends stayed here and they had airport pick-up

Mirador de Monasterio - overlooking the Monastery - looked nice
Calle Zela 301 Cercado Arequipa
Went there to get some photos
Matrimonial s/140
www.miradorelmonasterio.pe

Sites:

Wonderful Plaza de Armas
Monastery (Monasterio de Santa Catalina) - massive - two whole square blocks.
Amazing!
July 24 - 2 pm - santa catalina #301
s/35 each entry fee -

Museo Santuarios Andinos
Calle la Merced #110
www.ucsm.edu.pe/santuary
Fee to get in - s/20/person for foreigners
Tour guide was terrible so we didn't give her a tip (“All visitors enter with a tour guide who will be given a volunteer tip at the end of the tour”
Home of “Juanita the Ice Maiden”

Restaurants

Crepisimo; Alianza Francesa, Santa Catalina 208; www.crepisimo.com
This terrific cafe became our refuge from heavy Peruvian food. Delicious french crepes (savory and sweet) in a wonderful atmosphere. We ate there so often that we were on a first name basis with the wait staff. Good coffee and try the raspberry crepe with whipped cream!

Zig Zag - need reservations

Zela #210 (across from the San Francisco Church)
same owners of Creperie; she is french
Dinner for 2 - Aug. 1 - s/117

Chicha (Gaston Acuario's - had been to his Cusco restaurant also) -
Av. Santa Catalina #210 - nice location in a courtyard. But we are not overly impressed
with this highly touted restaurant and chef - at either here or Cusco
July 24 - dinner for two - s/173

Terrasse de Monasterio - Italian restaurant on Santa Catalina in the monastery wall.
Very nice atmosphere and we had a window on the interior of the monastery.

Shops:

Lots and lots of stores selling woven alpaca clothes and shawls

Patio del Ekeko - Upscale Mini mall on a walking street off the Main Square.
Mercaderes 141
A few artisan shops, nice restaurant, alpaca store, pisco and chocolate. Worth a look.

Claustros de la Compañía - Shops - kind of a mini-mall in the beautiful courtyard of this old monastery. Beautiful setting.

San Camilo Public Market - The food market in Arequipa was one of the nicest we have ever seen!!

Tours

Reality Tour - very unusual tour
"Helping Peruvian Poor People, who want to help Themselves"
A1 Travel Tours
Santa Catalina #203
Phone: #959391436
Miguel Fernandez
www.a1traveltours.com; www.airaveltours.com
s/45 each
July 25 - Started at 8:15 for half day tour.
Market outside the city (poor peoples market), Sillar rock quarry, Day care house,
Communal restaurant, Cemetery for everyday people

Liked Miguel very much- good heart and knowledgeable but spacey and not a good businessman. He missed the walking tour of Arequipa the next day - I was waiting for him at the office but he never showed.

Tour to Colca Canyon - to see the condors, climbing up to the high paramo environment where you see vicuñas (wild and protected relatives of alpacas), and then the fantastic ancient Incan terraces of villages along the way - one night, two days (you can do this in one very long day but we did it overnight.....leave your bags in storage in a hotel in Arequipa and only take an overnight bag).

Booked thorough A1Tours also but it was not their trip - combined with others. Stayed at Somac Wasi Hostal in Chivay (elevation 3630m) - s/80 per night - cheap and room was adequate.

La Calera Hot Springs - didn't do with the group but opted to walk around town instead - market area, to the river, etc.

We also ate dinner on our own rather than go to the dinner/folk dance extravaganza which, while it might be fun, sounded a bit touristy for our taste.

Fun market for handicrafts

5:30 am breakfast and then to the Condor Viewpoint from 8:30 - 10. Spectacular!

Another friend reports: booked overnight trip with Giardino Tours, stayed the night at the quaint La Casa de Mamayacci Lodge and left the next day by Giardino van for Puno (\$106 for two inclusive).

From Arequipa we flew to the Northern Highlands region of Peru (to Tarapoto through Lima)

More things to do for next time:

Spend more time exploring the Sacred Valley and stay in Ollantaytambo. Salt flats of Salinas

Stay longer in Puno, doing a homestay in indigenous areas around Lake Titicaca and traveling to the Island of the Sun (in Bolivia at the other end of Lake Titicaca)

Jungle adventure - Puerto Maldonado - reachable by bus or plane from Cuzco

Lake Sandoval is supposed to be lovely, outstanding bird watching.

