

Greg & Sierra's *PERU ADVENTURE*

November 24-30, 2024

GET
UNCOMFY

A little about Peru

Peru's history is deeply rooted in the ancient Inca Empire, which flourished in the Andes and built iconic sites, like Machu Picchu, before being conquered by Spanish forces led by Francisco Pizarro in the 16th century. The Spanish colonial period lasted until 1824 and introduced Catholicism, European architecture, and an unfortunate system of exploitation that devastated Indigenous populations. Since Peru declared and achieved sovereignty, the country has navigated political instability and economic reforms, but it has emerged as a vibrant blend of its indigenous, colonial, and modern influences.

Peru consists of 25 regions breaking down into 196 provinces that further break down into districts. The Lima province, which contains the capital city, is unique because it doesn't belong to any of the 25 regions (sort of like DC!). Barranca district is the capital of the Barranca province, and Huaraz district is the capital of the Ancash region.

Interesting facts

- Peru has 3 distinct geographical regions – the coast, which is arid and desert-like and home to cities like Lima; the highlands, where the Andes Mountains are located; and the jungle, which covers about 60% of Peru's land area and is home to the Amazon rainforest.
- Over 70% of the world's alpaca population lives in Peru.
- Peru's national dish is ceviche.
- Peru's most famous landmark, Machu Picchu, was voted as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in 2007.
- The Amazon River begins in Peru, specifically in the Peruvian Andes before flowing through Brazil to the Atlantic Ocean.
- Peru celebrates over 3,000 festivals annually, many of which blend Indigenous and Catholic traditions.
- Peru has one of the world's deepest canyons, Cotahuasi Canyon, which is more than twice as deep as the Grand Canyon.
- The potato was born in Peru, and today, over 4,000 varieties grow in the country, ranging from purple to pink to blue to red.

Know before you go

Time difference

There is no time difference between Peru and New York.

Political structure

Peru's government has 3 branches of government, like the US, but while US states have significant autonomy, Peru is a unitary country with its national government retaining more centralized authority than Peru's regional governments. Presidents in Peru are elected by popular vote, not an electoral college, and they can't serve consecutive terms but can be reelected.

Language

Over 80% of the population speaks Spanish, ~15% of the population speaks Quechua, and Aymara is widely spoken in southern areas near Lake Titicaca. Quechua was the primary language of the Inca Empire and is the most widely spoken Indigenous language in the Americas. Many common words like Quinoa and Llama come from Quechua.

Etiquette

Peruvians are generally welcoming to visitors and value politeness, respect, and warm interactions. They also value and take care of their environment. Make sure to dress conservatively in any religious areas.

Currency

As of Nov 2024, 1 USD = 3.80 Peruvian Sol (PEN).

Tipping

Tipping is not as customary as in the US, but generally, tip 10% at restaurants and to tour guides. For taxis, it is common to round up the fare.

Religion

The majority of Peruvians identify as Catholics, followed by Protestants. Syncretism is common, where Catholic beliefs blend with Indigenous spiritual practices. Traditional Andean and Amazonian spiritual practices still thrive, especially among Indigenous communities.

Getting around

Given the compact size of both Barranca and Huaraz, walking is the most convenient way to explore. Mototaxis (with 3 wheels) and cabs are also available.

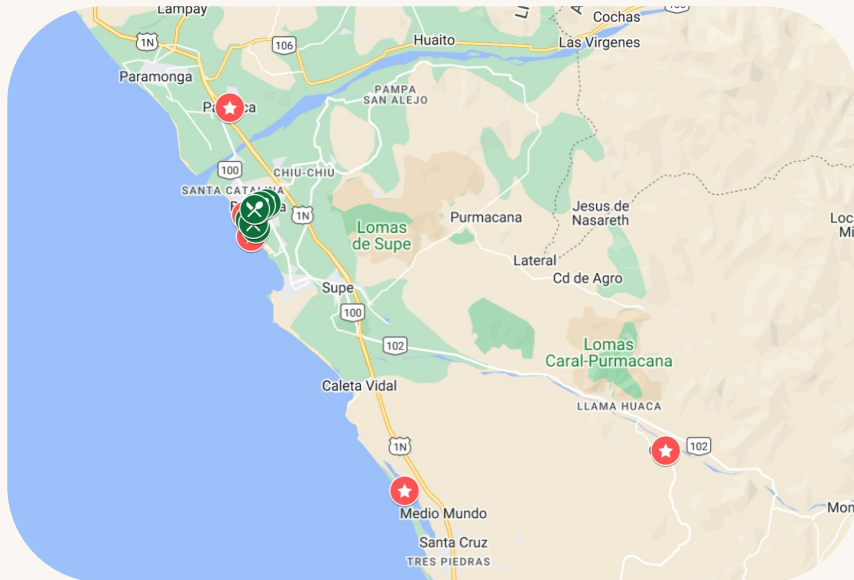
Temperature & altitude

Barranca will be warm during the day (70s/80s) and mild at night (60s) whereas Huaraz will be cooler (60s during the day and 40s at night). Expect occasional afternoon showers in Huaraz since it's the start of the rainy season there.

In Huaraz, make sure to acclimatize before doing anything overly strenuous.

Barranca recommendations

Barranca city is a small coastal port with a population of 60,000 people and an economy based largely on agriculture and fishing.



Click [here](#) for your interactive map of Barranca.

The coast

Take a 30-min stroll along Barranca's beaches (Chorrillos, Miraflores, and Puerto Chico) from **Malecon Chorrillos** (north) to **Cristo Redentor** (south).

- Malecon Chorrillos is the boardwalk/pier by Chorrillos beach, and Cristo Redentor is Barranca's large statue of Christ (inspired by Brazil's statue in Rio de Janeiro).

Indulge in Barranca's staples at an oceanside restaurant.

- **La Casa del Tacu Tacu** is known for its tacu tacu and pisco sours. Tacu tacu are Peruvian fried patties made from rice and beans.
- **Restaurant Tato** offers an interesting take on the traditional tacu tacu, which they call tacu tato, and pair with seafood.
- **Jota Restobar** serves a variety of seafood and is known for its stellar ceviche.

The city

Visit Plaza de Armas de Barranca, Barranca's central square.

- Barranca's main Catholic church, **Parroquia San Ildefonso**, is in the square.
- 2 min from Plaza de Armas is **Mercado Viejo**.
- According to deperu.com, there is the even better **Mercado Central de Barranca** 10 min from Plaza de Armas. It opened in 1936 and has 82 stalls.

Indulge in Barranca's specialties.

- **La Supanita** is 2 min from Plaza de Armas and is known for its hearty Peruvian breakfast. Try the huachana sausage!
- **La Gula** cooks traditional dishes over a wood fire and has "the world's best beans and quinoa."
- **El Rinconcito del Tunche** specializes in Amazonian cuisine, using the rich flavors and ingredients from Peru's jungle.
- **La Casona Del Capitan** specializes in traditional Peruvian barbeque.

The surrounding areas

Caral-Supe was the first civilization in the Americas, founded 5,000 years ago, that emerged at the same time as 5 other unrelated civilizations around the world.

- It's 1 hr southeast from Barranca (so you would need to back track a little). Alternatively, visit Caral on your way back to Lima. That would add 30 min to your drive.
- It's open daily from 9am to 4pm and tours are mandatory but very inexpensive.

Albuferaa de Medio Mundo is an ecological nature reserve home to a variety of resident and migratory birds.

- It's 35 min south from Barranca (this would also require back tracking a little).

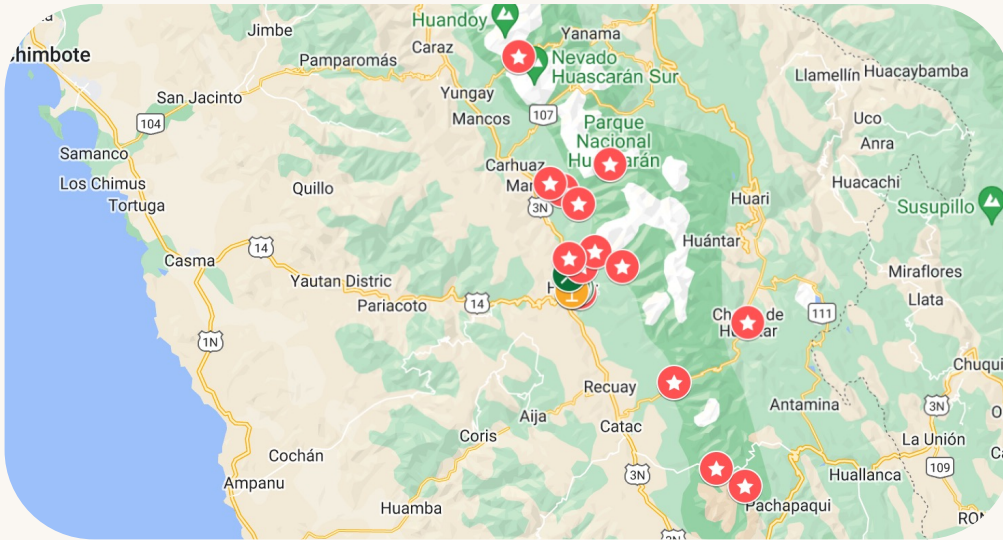
The surrounding areas, cont.

The town of **Pativilca** is famously associated with Simon Bolivar, the South American liberator.

- It's only 20 min north of Barranca, and you will drive through this town on your way to Huaraz.
- If you're up for it, check out the **Museo Bolivariano de Pativilca**, located in the house that was the headquarters of Simon Bolivar in 1823 and where he recovered from an illness. *Note:* On Google Maps, the museum is titled Ninguno and says knitting instructor (ha ha), but that should be the correct location.

Huaraz recommendations

Huaraz, “the adventure capital of Peru,” is the gateway to Cordillera Blanca, the world’s highest tropical mountain range. An earthquake in 1970 destroyed the city requiring a complete rebuild.



Click [here](#) for your interactive map of Huaraz.

The city & its cuisine

Stroll down Avenida Luzuriaga, the city’s main drag, and visit **Plaza de Armas de Huaraz**, Huaraz’s central square. You may even see some alpacas as locals often bring them for visitors!

- The square is home to the city’s main cathedral, **Catedral de San Sebastian y Inmaculada Concepcion**.
- **Regional Museum of Ancash** is also in the square and covers the region’s history and archaeology, and displays traditional art.
- **Mercado Central** is a 7-min walk from the square and offers fresh produce, traditional foods, local goods, and a glimpse into daily life.

Visit **Plaza La Soledad** and its accompanying church, **Iglesia del Señor de la Solvedad**, dedicated to Huaraz’s patron saint.

Take a 1-hr walk through the city to **Mirador Rataquenua**.

- Mirador Rataquenua is a viewpoint that allows you to see the city and its surrounding mountains.

The city & its cuisine, cont.

Stroll down **Jiron Jose Olaya**, the only street in Huaraz that survived the devastating earthquake in 1970.

- Jiron Jose Olaya retains its original cobblestone and traditional architecture. It provides a glimpse of what old Huaraz looked like.
- There are a few picanterias (traditional eateries) along the street that you can pop into or try Hierba Buena Restaurante (see below).

Indulge in Andean staples (and other options).

- Located on Jiron Jose Olaya, **Hierba Buena Restaurante** serves pachamanca, an authentic dish from the Inca Empire, made of meat and vegetables baked in an underground oven.
- **El Fogon** offers traditional Peruvian dishes like ceviche, lomo saltado, and Andean soups. Try trucha frita (fried trout), an Andean staple!
- **Kaypacha Restaurante** serves traditional Peruvian dishes with caldo de gallina, a comforting soup, being a standout item on the menu.
- For something different, make a reservation at **La Casita del Mago**, known for its Mediterranean and Spanish cuisine and a charismatic owner who is the chef and restaurant's entertainer.
- **Salme** is a highly-rated restaurant specializing in Korean cuisine.
- **Café Andino** is a popular coffee shop/restaurant known for its cozy atmosphere and stunning views.
- **Trivio Resto Bar** offers a blend of traditional Peruvian and international cuisines. It's known for its locally brewed craft beer, Sierra Andina, and organic coffee sourced from its farm.

For some nightlife, try:

- **Trece Buhos**, a popular bar and restaurant known for its variety of dishes, craft beers, and live music
- **El Alquimista Rooftop Bar**, an interesting spot offering very innovative drinks and panoramic views of the city

If you'd like to get off the beaten path, foodwise, try cuy (guinea pig), one of Huaraz's delicacies.

- **Don Cuy** is a popular joint serving cuy in different forms.
- To get even more off the beaten path, book the [Pachamanca Gastronomy Tour](#) which includes a cuy pachamanca meal at a local family's home outside of Huaraz.

The surrounding areas

Archaeological sites

Chavin de Huantar is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was the ceremonial and cultural center of a pre-Inca civilization.

- It's 2.5 hrs southeast. Consider taking a private guide or group tour if you'd prefer not to drive. Most tours include a stop at **Laguna Querococha**.

Wilcahuain Ruins are pre-Inca structures built by the Wari culture.

- They are 30 min north and feature well-preserved buildings that were used for ceremonial and burial purposes.
- The ruins are also the starting point for the challenging 7.5-mile (out and back) hike to **Lake Aguak**.

Natural wonders

Llanganuco is a pair of glacial lakes (Laguna Chinancocha and Laguna Orconcocha) that are easily accessible and on your way to the start of the Laguna 69 hike.

Pastouri Glacier is a stunning high-altitude glacier.

- It's 2.5 hrs south and accessed via a relatively short hike. It's over 16,400 feet above sea level.
- Check out the nearby **Puya Raimondii Forest**, featuring Puya Raimondii, a large flowering plant.
- Consider taking a private guide or group tour if you'd prefer not to drive.

Laguna Churup, a glacial lake accessed via a steep and demanding hike starting in Pitec.

- Pitec is 40 min east, and the hike is 3.7 miles (out and back). The end of the climb features a passage in the rocks equipped with fixed chains.

The surrounding areas, cont.

Traditional Andean village

Vicos is known for its Quechua heritage and offers immersive community-based tourism. Most immersive tours are multi-day, but you can explore the village without a tour.

- Vicos is 1-hr north and has many surrounding points of interest:
 - **Honocampa Archaeological Site**, an ancient Recuay culture settlement with beautiful views of the mountains and nearby waterfalls
 - A scenic, 2-mile hike to **Laguna Rocotuyoc** located at the foot of Navado Copa, a glaciated mountain
 - Hot spring baths, **Banos Termales de Chancos** or **Banos Termales Monterrey** (on the drive up or back)