

*This article first appeared Vol 8 Issue 5 of Global magazine*

## Peru

With a backbone constructed from the world's longest mountain range, and an intriguing coastal desert (including the mysterious Nazca Lines), over half of Peru's landmass is in fact swallowed up by the Amazon basin. Home to the world's highest navigable lake and railway line, the largest convent city on Earth, and the humble potato (you could eat a potato-based dish here every day for five years and never taste the same variety of potato twice), the country is geographically diverse: more than three quarters of the world's 32 types of climate can be experienced here. Peru's culture is a fusion of pre-Incan civilisations (such as the Chavín, the Moche and the Wari), the Incan Empire, and Spanish influence; today, some 90% of Peru's 28 million population are Catholic. Three times larger than the UK and boasting 10 World Heritage sites, it's easy to see why Peru is the number one destination in South America for so many travellers.



For most people, Machu Picchu is Peru. Travelling to the country and not visiting this World Heritage site is almost unthinkable. Machu Picchu is an excellent place to begin our tour of Peru, as it is often the first place on people's must-see list.

'Discovered' by the American archaeologist Hiram Bingham in 1911 (although numerous documents and maps prepared in the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries had already located and named the site of the ruins), it remains one of the most important archaeological discoveries of all time. What makes Machu Picchu all the more exciting is the fact that even today, no-one is quite sure exactly what it was built for. Some experts have speculated that it was a provincial capital, others think it was a ceremonial centre. Indeed, the first native Quechua-speaking Peruvian President, Toledo, held his inauguration at Machu Picchu in 2001. Early discoveries

of female skeletons prompted more than one individual to proclaim that Machu Picchu was some kind of sanctuary for women, although recent examinations have revealed that the male-female ratio was relatively normal – quashing the popular ‘Virgins Of The Sun’ theory. Bingham was convinced that Machu Picchu was ‘Vilcabamba The Old’, the last refuge of the legendary Incas. (In fact, Bingham did discover Vilcabamba when he uncovered Espíritu Pampa, some 100km further into the jungle, although at the time he dismissed the site as unimportant.) The great thing about Machu Picchu is that you can explore the place and then make your own mind up... along with half a million other tourists who visit each year; a number that is alarming many observers. The authorities believe that one way of controlling numbers is to increase prices. Sadly, the soaring cost of entering the archaeological ruins means that many Peruvians cannot afford to visit their own heritage.

It is possible to travel directly from the nearby city of Cusco to Aguas Calientes – the town at the foot of Machu Picchu – by train. However, cramming this once-in-a-lifetime experience into a single day hardly does the region justice. By spending a few days in the area, you will gain a much greater understanding of the mysterious Incas, and come to appreciate that Machu Picchu is not the only jewel in the district.

Trekkers will inevitably be drawn towards the so-called ‘Inca Trail’ to Machu Picchu, although it’s important to remember that there are of course many Inca trails throughout South America. For at the height of its power, the Inca Empire expanded from Cusco to encompass an area incorporating all of modern Peru, as well as southern Colombia, the Andean regions of northern Argentina and Bolivia, and half of Chile. That said, the railway halt at Kilometre 88 (between Cusco and Aguas Calientes in the Sacred Valley) is the starting point for *The Inca Trail*. This 33km hike is a superb introduction to the phenomenal construction methods and workmanship of Inca the engineers. It also serves to prepare visitors – mentally, physically and spiritually – for the wonders of Machu Picchu.

You will need to use a foreign or local trekking company if you want to trek the Inca Trail as it is illegal for hikers to follow the route independently. The reason? Apparently, independent hikers are less environmentally responsible than group treks. This, of course, flies in the face of the fact that group treks guarantee a far greater number of erosion-causing feet on the trail (unless you join a trek where you carry your own gear). And why should independent trekkers be more likely to leave rubbish behind than group hikers? I've seen the latter hand over their litter to staff at campsites on the Inca Trail, who have then thrown away the trash down hillsides by the box-load after the clients have set off the following morning. There are good reasons for group-only treks (such as employment for local people) but supposed improvements to the environment is not one of them. With daily numbers on the Inca Trail limited to 500 people, and substantial taxes being levied on licensed trekking operators, expect to pay upwards of \$240 for a full-service, high standard trek booked directly with an outfitter in Cusco. (If the thought of crowds along the Inca Trail leave you pining for something altogether more quiet remote, a rarely visited week-long hike circumnavigates the mountain of Ausangate (6384m), southern Peru's highest peak. Some of the better operators in Cusco should be able to make the necessary arrangements for you.)

If you don't fancy trooping along the Inca Trail but still want a warm-up prior to catching the train and bus to Machu Picchu, then the accessible archaeological sites at the villages of Pisac and Ollantaytambo in the adjoining Sacred Valley serve as an intriguing introduction to the Inca civilisation. Ollantaytambo is the only Inca-designed settlement that has been constantly inhabited since the 13th century. Wander around the narrow streets and you'll find yourself marvelling at 700 year old walls and doorways.

Cusco was the foremost city in the Inca Empire, and as you would expect is inundated with fabulous sites such as nearby Sacsayhuamán. However, if all this talk of ancient architecture is leaving you a bit cold, then just take a stroll along the street of Hatunrumiyoc (south-east of Cusco's Plaza de Armas) and gaze upon the 12-sided

stone. How the Inca stonemasons put this edifice together so precisely without the use of any modern construction techniques or bonding materials is anyone's guess.

The popularity of Machu Picchu has of course transformed Cusco into a fantastic place to relax and enjoy great accommodation and restaurants, although you'll need to watch the effect that the altitude of 3300m has on your system (see 'Staying Safe At Altitude'). Sadly, there is a dark side to Cusco: as in other parts of Peru, thousands of street children hide in the shadows. A number of hostels and eateries run by private individuals and the Catholic church direct profits towards caring for this myriad of youngsters. Patronising such establishments during your stay in Cusco will help to bring about a positive change in the lives of some of these forgotten children.

The Inca Empire came to something of a train crash end when, right in the middle of a titanic clash of the armies belonging to the two sons of the 11th Inca, Wayna Capac (the final Inca to rule over a united empire), a handful of Spaniards led by Francisco Pizarro landed in northern Ecuador, captured and subsequently murdered the victorious son, slaughtered a few thousand unarmed Indians and finally captured Cusco. They even came out on top after the last of the great Incas, Manco Inca, laid siege to Cusco with an army that could have filled every seat in the old Wembley Stadium. The final showdown was at Sacsayhuamán. Manco and his troops were routed, and fled to Vilcabamba The Old. Four centuries later and Hiram Bingham went looking for their final refuge.

For their part, the Spanish tore down many of the Inca buildings in Cusco – mainly as a result of fire-bombing by Manco's troops which left many parts of the city ablaze – which is why the modern Plaza de Armas is surrounded by a Spanish church and cathedral. But the conquistadors never found Machu Picchu.

It is easy to think that the Incas were the only civilisation of any note to inhabit Peru. But take the train (or increasingly, the bus) from Cusco to serene Lake Titicaca and there, in the middle of the world's highest navigable lake, you will find descendants

of the Uros people, who took to living on islands constructed entirely of reeds, in order to escape the wrath of the expansionistic Incas. These floating islands are home to several hundred people, a school, a post office and too many souvenir shops. Even so, it is a remarkable sight that can be taken in en route to the solid islands of Isla Taquile and Amantani. If you are planning to stay overnight on either of these exquisite, laid-back isles and want to ensure that the islanders benefit from your custom (rather than the touts at the quayside in Puno), try to ensure that you catch the islanders' boat and pay your hosts directly for your accommodation. On the quieter of the two islands, Amantani, the villagers have agreed a rotation system so that everyone has the opportunity to benefit financially from visiting tourists. Other islands include Isla del Sol and Isla de la Luna (the Islands of the Sun and Moon), and also Isla Suasi which is home to an ecologically-friendly hotel.

In the future, it might be possible to sail across Titicaca on the 'Yavari' a steamship manufactured in England in 1862. Her 1000-plus parts were then shipped to Peru and carried on muleback for assembly on the lake, a journey of six years. After a useful life she was decommissioned by the Peruvian Navy and subsequently lay abandoned in Puno. Now the Yavari is gradually being restored by a team led by an Englishwoman, Meriel Larken. The ship's energetic Peruvian captain will show you enthusiastically around the vessel; all donations go towards the restoration.

From Lake Titicaca, it is just a short drive (or paddle) into Bolivia. But turning away from the border and back into Peru, the next major attraction on our agenda is the beautiful city of Arequipa. Surrounded by wild landscapes — including 5000m and 6000m peaks, one of the world's deepest canyons, and a national park — Arequipa's centre-piece is the Monasterio de Santa Catalina. Begun in the 16th Century by a wealthy widow who attracted young ladies from affluent Spanish families, the nuns enjoyed something of a hedonistic way of life (including servants) until the Pope despatched the fearsome Sister Josefa Cadena to run the place in the late 19th Century. The high-spirited nuns were sent packing and the slaves were freed (many of whom decided to become nuns). For the next 100 years no-one went in and no-

one came out. Finally, 35 years ago, the mayor of Arequipa insisted that the convent welcome in the 20th Century. And that included tourists. Wandering around the convent (the handful of remaining nuns live in a private corner), one is struck by the beauty and silence of the place. The high walls screen out much of the city's hustle and bustle. In order to appreciate the size of the convent, book a room in one of the nearby hotels which offer rooftop views overlooking the establishment.

Before heading for the capital of Peru, Lima, try to find time to visit the Nazca Lines. Like Machu Picchu, no-one is 100% certain why these gigantic engravings in the sand were created. Theories range from a suggestion that E.T. and his friends dropped by and used the desert as a canvas, through to a notion that the Nazca people drew and then viewed the creatures from rudimentary hot air balloons. It is certainly true that the only way to really appreciate the 70-odd creations is on a 30 minute, \$50 flight in a light aircraft. Avoid taking any 4WD tours of the lines: you will see nothing, and the tyre marks do an excellent job of scarring the World Heritage site.

After all this time on the road, Lima – with its excellent restaurants and accommodation, and superb museums which contain many of the best artefacts uncovered from Nazca and Inca excavations – might come as a welcome tonic after weeks on the road. But if you are thirsty for more adventure, a range of options now present themselves to you. You could fly to Iquitos, Pucallpa or Puerto Maldonado and experience Peru's rich jungle, which carpets over half of the country. (Puerto Maldonado can also be reached from Cusco). Or you could catch a weekend train to Huancayo, a head-splitting journey from sea level to the highest point at 4781m. The line then descends to Huancayo at a comparatively lowly 3260m. To put this journey in perspective, it is very nearly the equivalent of taking a train to the summit of Mont Blanc (a feat which French engineers attempted but thankfully failed to complete).

Mountain-lovers will find themselves being sucked towards the Cordillera Blanca and the less-frequented Cordillera Huayhuash (but see an important note under 'Know Before You Go'.) One of the mountains in the Huayhuash, Siula Grande, was the

scene of Joe Simpson's and Simon Yates' epic battle for survival, told by Simpson in his award-winning book, 'Touching The Void'. The Huayhuash and Blanca are both accessed from Huaraz. Comfortable coach services link the city with Lima.

However, if you want a final fix of archaeology, point your compass from Huaraz towards the northern coastline. The capital of the Chimu civilisation, Chan Chan, was built around 1300 AD. It is easily reached from the city of Trujillo. Chan Chan is widely regarded as the largest pre-Columbian city in the Americas. Nearby are the massive Moche Pyramids of the Sun and the Moon, which were constructed 600 years before Chan Chan. The Pyramid of the Sun was built using an estimated 140 million mud bricks, making it the largest structure in the country.

While you are in Trujillo, why not hop on a bus to the seaside hamlet of Huanchaco? Fishermen here make their boats out of the same tortora reeds as the Uros people on Lake Titicaca. At first light every morning, a flotilla of the little tortora 'caballitos' (literally 'little horses') and attendant fishermen set out through the surf to harvest purple crabs, which in the afternoon are taken by their wives to the market in Trujillo.

Budding Indiana Joneses will head slightly inland to the little town of Chachapoyas, found at 2335m and surrounded by cloud forests on the eastern Andean slopes. The area is riddled with ancient sites ranging from the well-excavated 500-year-old city of Kuelap to overgrown citadels which have yet to be discovered. Fame and fortune for the Hiram Bingham of the 21st century awaits...

### The Legendary South American Explorers (SAE)

SAE has offices and members' clubhouses in Lima and Cusco. Expert advice is available on all aspects of travel throughout Peru and the rest of South America (they also have club houses in Ecuador and New York). SAE will help members with everything from long-term storage of gear to assistance if they are robbed. Annual membership includes use of clubhouse facilities (especially useful in Lima if you

want to escape the noise and smog of the city) and a quarterly magazine.

[www.saexplorers.org](http://www.saexplorers.org)

## Places To Eat – Three Of The Tastiest

Rancho Chico, Tingua (45km north of Huaraz)

Serves a delicious pachamanca at the weekend. This consists of portions of meat and vegetables which are neatly wrapped in little parcels of leaves and then cooked underground for several hours. Turn up at lunch for the tastiest servings.

Kin Taro, Cusco

A tiny Japanese establishment. The fresh sashimi comes from trout in nearby high-altitude lakes.

La Rosa Nautica, Lima

This upmarket restaurant can be found on Playa Costa Verdes historic pier in the Miraflores district. Smell the sea, spot the surfers and enjoy a great three course set menu for around \$20.

## Places To Stay – Five Of The Best Value

These are just a handful of the hundreds of affordable hotels available throughout the country. The author has stayed in all of these establishments, but inevitably prices shift and reputations rise and wane so consult a recently-published guidebook for additional suggestions. Prices are for double rooms.

Casa La Reyna, Arequipa (\$10)

With rooftop views of the nearby monastery and mountains, this hotel is close to the beating heart of Arequipa. tel: +51 (0)54 28 6578.

Hostal Los Niños (\$28)

Even if the profits from this spotless establishment didn't go towards providing meals for 500 street children every day, I'd still be recommending it. The Dutch owners recently opened a second hotel nearby. tel: +51 (084) 23 1424; [www.ninoshotel.com](http://www.ninoshotel.com); [ninoshotel@terra.com.pe](mailto:ninoshotel@terra.com.pe)

Hostel Schatzi, Huaraz (\$19)

A pleasant courtyard surrounded by just 10 private rooms. tel: +51 (0)43 72 3074.

José Luis, Lima (\$10)

An old private residence. The rooms are basic but clean, and the host speaks English. Superb value for the price but reservations are mandatory. tel: +51 (0)1 444 1015; [hsjluis@terra.com.pe](mailto:hsjluis@terra.com.pe).

La Casa Suiza, Huanchaco (\$10)

A quiet and clean hotel with plenty of facilities, including internet access and surfboard rental. tel: +51 (0)44 46 1825; [www.casasuiza.com](http://www.casasuiza.com)

Las Castellana, Lima. \$60

A characterful hotel in an upmarket corner of Lima, Las Castellana boasts a lawn and terrace on which to enjoy breakfast (included in the room rate). However, taxis ordered at the desk are expensive. tel: +51 (0)1 444 4662; [www.hotel-lacastellana.com](http://www.hotel-lacastellana.com)

## Wild Peru – Eight Of The Best

10% of Peru is protected with eight national parks, eight national reserves, six national sanctuaries, three historic sanctuaries and 20 other reservations. The national parks are:

Parque Nacional de Cutervo

Peru's first national park, created in 1961. Home to bats, bears and orchids.

When To Go: May - October.

### Parque Nacional del Manu

Manu is the largest national park in Peru and a UNESCO 'Biosphere Reserve'. Over 1000 species of birds, 13 species of monkeys and 20,000 different types of flora can be found here, as well as tribal people and a scientific station.

When To Go: May to October.

### Parque Nacional Huascarán

A mountain playground for hikers, bikers and climbers, the park takes its name from the famous 6000m mountain that is the highest in Peru. Included in the park is the peak of Alpamayo, widely regarded as one of the most beautiful mountains in the world.

When To Go: May to September

### Parque Nacional Cerros de Amotape

An equatorial 'dry' forest that is home to jaguars, condors and over 100 species of trees.

When To Go: most months of the year, but July to November best.

### Parque Nacional Río Abiseo

Designated a 'Natural Heritage of Humankind' by UNESCO because of its archaeological importance. 36 sites, including the 'Gran Pajatén' which is reported to be 10 times larger than Machu Picchu.

When To Go: May to September

### Parque Nacional Yanachaga-Chemillén

Created to protect the ecosystem of the eastern Andes, this park offers terrific views of the Andes. Orchids and bespectacled bears can be found in its rain forest.

When To Go: May to October.

### Parque Nacional Bahuaja-Sonene

Created five years ago, the park is home to an indigenous tribe. Over 1000 species of butterfly, 150 different dragonflies and 73 varieties of horsefly (lovely!) have already been discovered.

When To Go: May to October

Parque Nacional de Tingo María

Contains many of the species also found in the Parque Nacional de Cutervo.

When To Go: From May to October.

Wherever you travel in Peru, avoid buying products that clearly exploit animals (such as skins and shells). If you are using the services of a local guide, ensure that porters are equipped correctly and that care is taken to minimise the effect your party has on the environment.

Wet Peru

Peru has year-round surf. May to September promises small north swells and big southerly swells. October to April delivers big swell from the south. With no coral, hardly any sharks, and relatively few surfers, January to April is the best time to travel for surf. There are more than 20 surf spots in the 140km stretch from Cerro Azul to Lima.

Inland, and rivers can be tackled in a kayak, a canoe or an inflatable raft. There are dozens of navigable rivers ranging from the popular Urubamba – which flows through the Sacred Valley and has sections that will appeal to all grades of kayakers and rafters – to the Rio Colca and Rio Cotahuasi, two dangerous rivers that attract world-class paddlers.

Just How Safe Is Peru?

Peru – and in particular Lima and Cusco – has a reputation for street crime. Whilst robberies and muggings do of course occur, visitors can do much to reduce the risk by using their common sense when moving around.

- Do not walk visibly display your wealth with expensive cameras and watches
- Pay for items with loose change; do not bring out a roll of notes.
- Lock all luggage and securely strap bags to your person in crowds.
- Be particularly alert around bus stations, railway stations and airports.
- Do not leave your drink unattended in a bar.
- Use the chains and clips provided by many restaurants in Lima and Cusco to secure your bag to the table.
- On arrival in a new place, take advice from your hotel owner on no-go areas in and around the outskirts of town (including nearby hills).
- Avoid walking around at night. Instead, ask your restaurant/hotel to order a cab. Be extremely cautious of taxis touting for business on the street as some are unlicensed. Do not allow the taxi driver to pick up 'friends' en route.

Find out the latest travel advice from the Travel Unit of the FCO (details in the 'What You Need To Know' section).

### Staying Safe At Altitude

Many parts of Peru are over 2800m. Travelling to this height and beyond will expose you to the risk of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). By travelling to altitude slowly – preferably on foot rather than by vehicle or aircraft – you will stand a good chance of

minimising the chance of contracting this potentially fatal condition. Signs and symptoms of AMS include headaches, fatigue, dizziness, poor appetite, nausea, vomiting, insomnia and irregular breathing during sleep. These conditions can of course be triggered by other medical conditions. But the message is clear: if in doubt, assume AMS and descend.

Note that it is not just mountain ranges such as the Cordillera Blanca and Cordillera Huayhuash which visitors need to be aware of: Lake Titicaca, Cusco, the Inca Trail and Machu Picchu are also at significant altitudes. If you arrive unacclimatised in Cusco, allow at least three rest days to begin the process of acclimatisation before setting off on the Inca Trail. It's worth remembering that the delightful village of Urumbamba in the Sacred Valley (a two hour bus ride away) is over 450m lower than Cusco; a drop in elevation that is usually sufficient to promote recovery in many people. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that if you are flying into Cusco, it might be worth travelling to Urumbamba immediately upon arrival. After relaxing for a few days – and visiting the workshop of renowned artist Pablo Seminario – you can then re-ascend to Cusco in order to enjoy the city. Locals swear by coca tea when they need to relieve the symptoms of AMS, but the most effective proven cure is always descent.

## Peru: What You Need To Know

### The Facts

Population: Approximately 28 million

Capital: Lima.

Currency: Nuevo sol

Language: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara and other indigenous languages

### Flights

Flights from the UK to Lima (with a single stop in Spain or the USA) can usually be secured for between £600 and £800 return, depending on the time of year. To offset

the CO2 emissions from your flight, log onto [www.climatecare.org](http://www.climatecare.org) or [www.futureforests.com](http://www.futureforests.com). There is a \$30 airport departure tax on international flights from Lima (the equivalent amount in nuevo sol is also accepted).

### Internal Travel

Choose from winding roads, overnight railway journeys or internal flights. Amongst young people, road accidents are the biggest cause of death and injury (and are second only to heart attacks amongst older travellers), causing 25 times more deaths than infectious diseases. So if you do travel by road, choose your driver and vehicle with care, and be especially wary of travelling by road at night. That said, there are some two-crew, long distance coaches operated by reputable companies such as Cruz del Sur and Ormeño. Several train services are available, including Lima to Huancayo and Cusco to Puno. Because of the increasing dominance of road travel, the rail service from Puno to Arequipa has been suspended, but can be arranged for parties of 40-plus. The most famous train service is of course the Cusco to Machu Picchu service. Several express and stopping services are available each day, but do try to book in advance. Internal flights link Lima, Cusco, Arequipa, Trujillo, Iquitos, Juliaca and more than a dozen other destinations. Airlines include LanPeru, AeroCóndor and Tans. Overbooking and cancellations on internal flights is par for the course, so always re-confirm your flights and expect delays. Typical internal flight tax is \$5.

### Money Matters

A mixture of credit cards, cash and traveller's cheques is the best bet. I carry a VISA and Mastercard in order to increase the chance of finding a suitable ATM in cities. (Avoid using these machines at night.) Traveller's cheques need to be exchanged in banks; expect long queues. American Express has a good reputation when it comes to lost or stolen cheques. Street moneychangers will swap your foreign currency for local bills. This is legal, but check the notes you are handed carefully before heading off. In April 2005, counterfeit \$100 notes penetrated the Peruvian banking system.

## Paperwork

90 day visas are normally issued to British citizens upon arrival in Peru, and can usually be extended for a further 60 days.

## When To Go

Peru has two seasons. The dry season lasts from May to September. The wet season runs from October to April. However, these two seasons have very different effects on the mountain, coast and jungle regions:

Region	Dry Season	Rainy Season
Coast	cold and wet	hot in the day, cool at night
Mountain	dry, cold at night	rain and/or snow
Jungle	hot and wet	rain

Of course there's no guarantee that it won't snow in the mountains during the dry season!

## Health

Carrying a comprehensive medical kit that includes a sterile needle pack is a sensible precaution. The following inoculations are usually recommended: tetanus; hepatitis A; typhoid; yellow fever. A yellow fever certificate is required if you're entering from an infected country, so it is definitely worth carrying this with your passport. In addition, diphtheria, tuberculosis, rabies, hepatitis B, meningitis and cholera injections are sometimes advised. Visit your GP (preferably two months before the start of your trip) for the most up-to-date advice and information. In April 2005, an outbreak of dengue fever was reported north of Lima. Cases of people contracting bat-borne rabies have recently been on the increase in the province of Amazonas near Ecuador. Check the up-to-date situation on the FCO website.

## Accommodation

Peru offers all manner of accommodation to suit your pocket. For example, in the Miraflores sector of Lima, expect to pay upwards of \$10 per night per person, whilst in the northern town of Trujillo, the minimum seems to be about \$5. For only a little more money, you can expect to find some really delightful family-run hotels. The best places invariably get booked in advance, so it is always worth calling ahead. In remote villages you might struggle to find even basic accommodation, although it is usually possible to find a family prepared to give you shelter in return for some remuneration.

#### Contact

British Embassy in Peru: [www.britemb.org.pe](http://www.britemb.org.pe)

FCO: [www.fco.gov.uk/travel](http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel); tel: 0870 6060290

Pablo Seminario, Urumbamba: [www.ceramicaseminario.com](http://www.ceramicaseminario.com); tel: +51(0)84 201002

PeruRail: [www.perurail.com](http://www.perurail.com)

Vaccination info: [www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk)

Isla Amantani: email [pachatata\\_isla@yahoo.com](mailto:pachatata_isla@yahoo.com) in Spanish to request that someone from the islanders' boat meets you at the quayside in Puno.

#### Know Before You Go

Although the Shining Path terrorism associated with the country in the 1980s and 1990s has almost disappeared, isolated incidents suggest the organisation is still active. May 2005 marked the 25th anniversary of the "Beginning of the Armed Struggle" by the Shining Path in the Ayacucho region. In addition, sporadic incidents of tourists being held up by bandits do happen. For example, armed men accosted British trekkers on the Huayhuash Circuit last year. In addition to the British Embassy in Peru, there are Honorary Consuls in Arequipa, Cusco and Trujillo. For up-to-the-minute travel and safety advice, and Consul contact details, visit the FCO and British Embassy websites. Finally, be aware that safety and equipment standards on all manner of adventure sports may not be as high as in the UK.

#### Read On

Altitude Illness, Prevention & Treatment. Bezruchka. ISBN 1871890578

Exploring Cusco. Peter Frost. 9972901564\*

Latin American Spanish. Lonely Planet. 1740591704

Peru Insight Guide. ISBN: 981-258-028-X

Peru. Lonely Planet. ISBN 1740592093

Touching The Void. Joe Simpson. ISBN: 0099452294

The White Rock. Hugh Thomson. ISBN: 0753813580

Quechua Phrasebook. Lonely Planet. ISBN 1864503815

Wildflowers of the Cordillera Blanca. ISBN 9972906809 (usually available in Huaraz)

1:100,000 maps may be available from IGN, Avenida Aramburu 1190, Surquillo, Lima (take your passport).

\* One source for this scarce book can be found at:

[www.geocities.com/TheTropics/Cabana/6110/miscel/perubooks.htm](http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/Cabana/6110/miscel/perubooks.htm)

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