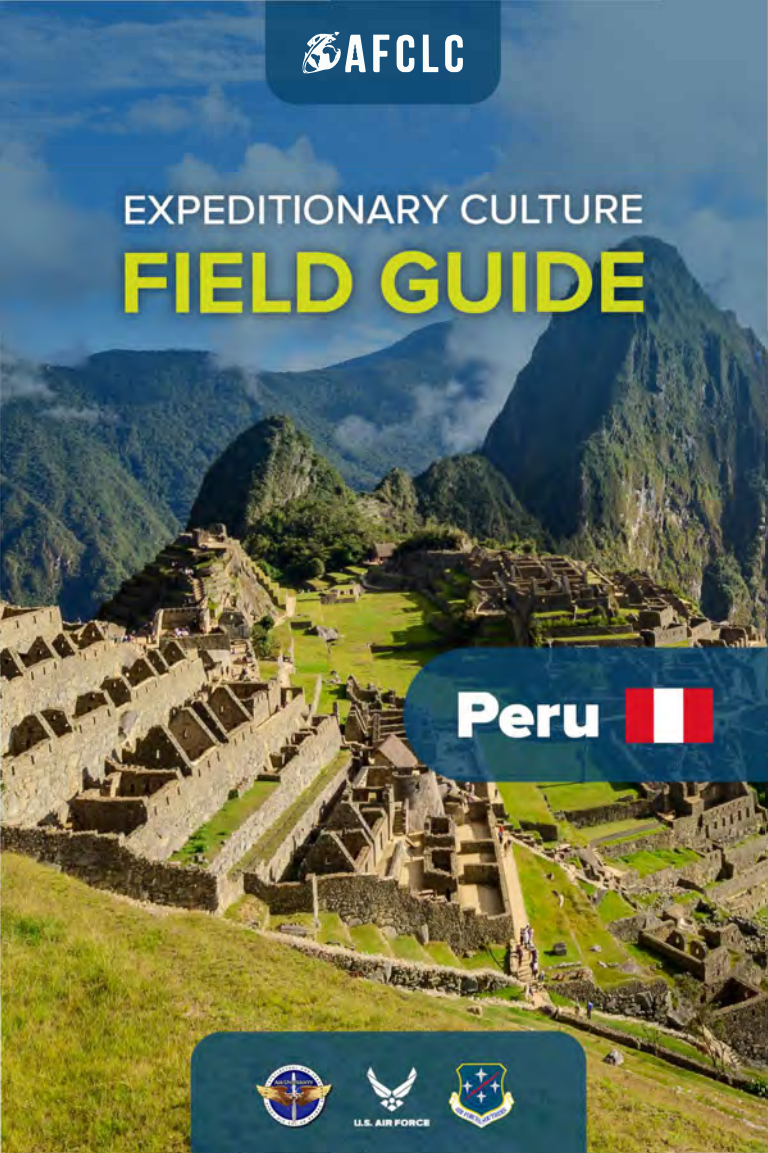
AFCLC

EXPEDITIONARY CULTURE
FIELD GUIDE



Peru

U.S. AIR FORCE

About this Guide

This guide is designed to prepare you to deploy to culturally complex environments and successfully achieve mission objectives. The fundamental information it contains will help you understand the unique cultural features of your assigned location and gain skills necessary for achieving mission success.

The guide consists of two parts:

Part 1 is the "Culture General" section, which provides the foundational knowledge you need to operate effectively in any global environment with a focus on the Andean Ridge region of South America.

Part 2 is the "Culture Specific" section, which describes unique cultural features of Peruvian society. It applies culture-general concepts to help increase your knowledge of your assigned deployment location. This section is designed to complement other pre-deployment training.

For further information, visit the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) website at www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/ or contact the AFCLC Region Team at AFCLC.Region@us.af.mil.

ECFG Republic of Peru

PART 1 – CULTURE GENERAL

What is Culture?

Fundamental to all aspects of human existence, culture shapes the way humans view life and functions as a tool we use to adapt to our social and physical environments. A culture is the sum of all of the beliefs, values, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning for a society. All human beings have culture, and individuals within a culture share a general set of beliefs and values.

Members of a culture also usually assign the same meanings to the symbols in that culture. A symbol is when one thing – an image, word, object, idea, or story – represents another thing. For example, the American flag is a physical and visual symbol of a core American value—freedom. At the same time, the story of George Washington admitting to having chopped down a cherry tree is also symbolic because it represents the premium Americans place on personal honesty and leadership integrity.

Force Multiplier

The military services have learned through experience the importance of understanding other cultures. Unlike the 20th-century bipolar world order that dominated US strategy for nearly half a century, today the US military is operating in what we classify as asymmetric or irregular conflict zones, where the notion of cross-cultural interactions is on the leading edge of our engagement strategies.

We have come to view the people themselves, rather than the political system or physical environment, as the decisive feature in conflict areas. Our primary objective hinges on influencing constructive change through peaceful means where possible. We achieve this endeavor by encouraging local nationals to focus on developing stable political, social, and economic institutions that reflect their cultural beliefs and traditions.

Therefore, understanding the basic concepts of culture serves as a force multiplier. Achieving an awareness and respect of a society's values and beliefs enables deploying forces to build relationships with people from other cultures, positively influence their actions, and ultimately achieve mission success.

Cultural Domains

Culture is not just represented by the beliefs we carry internally, but also by our behaviors and by the systems members of a culture create to organize their lives. These systems, such as political or educational institutions, help us to live in a manner that is appropriate to our culture and encourages us to perpetuate that culture into the future.

We can organize behaviors and belief systems into categories – what the Air Force refers to as "cultural domains" – in order to better understand the primary values and characteristics of a society. A cross-culturally competent military member can use these domains–which include kinship, language and communication, social and political systems and others (see chart on next page)–as tools for understanding and adapting to any culture. For example, by understanding the way a culture defines family and kinship, a US military member operating overseas can more effectively interact with members of that culture.

Social Behaviors across Cultures

While humankind shares basic behaviors, various groups enact or even categorize those behaviors differently across cultural boundaries. For example, all societies obtain food for survival, although agrarian societies generally produce their own food for limited consumption using very basic techniques.

Conversely, industrialized nations have more sophisticated market economies, producing foodstuffs for universal consumption. Likewise, all cultures value history and tradition, although they represent these concepts through a variety of unique forms of symbolism. While the dominant world religions share the belief in one God, their worship practices vary with their traditional historical development. Similarly, in many kin-

based cultures where familial bonds are foundational to social identity, it is customary for family or friends to serve as godparents, while for other societies this practice is nearly non-existent.

Worldview

One of our most basic human behaviors is the tendency to classify others as similar or different based on our cultural standards. As depicted in the chart below, we can apply the 12 cultural domains to help us compare similarities and differences across cultures. We evaluate others' behavior to determine if they are "people like me" or "people not like me." Usually, we assume that those in the "like me" category share our perspectives and values.

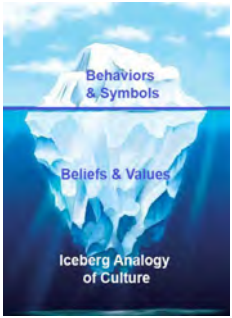
This collective perspective forms our worldview—how we see the world and understand our place in it. Your worldview functions as a lens through which you see and understand the world. It helps you to interpret your experiences and the values and behaviors of other people that you encounter. Consider your worldview as a way of framing behavior, providing an accountability standard for actions and a logical explanation of why we individually or collectively act in a certain manner.

Cultural Belief System

An important component of a worldview is our belief system. A community's belief system assigns meaning, sets its universal standards of what is good and bad, defines right and wrong behavior, and assigns a value of meaningful or meaningless. Our beliefs form the fundamental values we hold to be true, regardless of whether there is evidence to support these ideas. Beliefs are a central aspect of human culture. They are shared views about world order and how the universe was physically and socially constructed.

While all people have beliefs, their specific components tend to vary depending upon respective world views. What people classify as good or bad, right or wrong depends on our deeply-held beliefs we started developing early in life that have helped shape our characters. Likewise, these values are ingrained in our personalities and shape our behavior patterns and our self-identities. Because cultural beliefs are intensely held, they are difficult, though not impossible, to change.

Core Beliefs



Core beliefs shape and influence certain behaviors and also serve to rationalize those behaviors. Therefore, knowledge of individual or group beliefs can be useful in comprehending or making sense of their activities. We will use the iceberg model for classifying culture to illustrate two levels of meaning, as depicted. Beliefs and values, portrayed by the deeper and greater level of the submerged iceberg, are seldom visible, but are indicated / hinted at / referenced by our behaviors and symbols (top level). It is important to recognize, though, that the parts of culture that are not visible (under the waterline) are informing and shaping what is being made visible (above the waterline).

In many cases, different worldviews may present behaviors that are contrary to our own beliefs, particularly in many regions where US forces deploy. Your ability to suspend judgment in

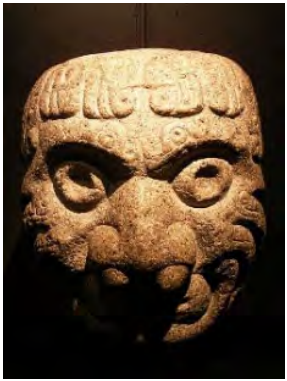
order to understand another perspective is essential to establishing relationships with your host-nation counterparts. The ability to withhold your opinion and strive to understand a culture from a member of that culture's perspective is known as cultural relativism. It often involves taking an alternate perspective when interpreting others' behaviors and is critical to your ability to achieve mission success.

As you travel throughout South America, you will encounter cultural patterns of meaning that are common across the region. What follows is a general description of 12 cultural domains which are used to frame those commonalities.

CULTURAL DOMAINS

1. History and Myth

History and myth are related concepts. History is a record of the past that is based on verifiable facts and events. Myth can act as a type of historical record, although it is usually a story which members of a culture use to explain community origins or important events that are not verifiable or which occurred prior to written language.



The Andean Ridge includes five countries on the South American continent: Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Scientists believe the first humans arrived in the region by approximately 11000 BC. Hunter-gatherers congregated in fishing villages along the Pacific coast and developed agriculture in the highlands between 5000 BC and 2500 BC. From 1800-500 BC, Andean peoples developed more complex societies that eventually shared a culture known as Chavin. They built simple monuments and developed copper and bronze metallurgy.

From approximately 200 BC to 600 AD, smaller regional civilizations rose and fell in the Andes. Among them, the Nazca of southern Peru are known for creating large images in the desert floor ranging in size from 150 to 500 ft crossways. The Tiwanaku and Wari empires rose in the 7th century AD in the mountains and highlands of Peru and Bolivia. While the Tiwanaku developed unique agricultural techniques for extremely high elevations, the Wari built roads and developed terraced agriculture – a technique still common in the Andean Ridge today. Both empires declined due to prolonged drought in the 10th century, giving way to a period of smaller kingdoms that lasted until the 15th century.

The Inca Empire, with its capital city at Cuzco in modern day Peru, expanded rapidly through marriage, military coercion, and conquest in the 15th century. The Incas built roads, irrigation networks, and thousands of warehouses for storing preserved meat and potatoes, as well as valuables. The empire fell into a civil war in 1525 when two brothers competed for the throne. The war ended in 1532, just prior to a Spanish conquest. Of note, scholars refer to the millennia of history in the New World prior to the arrival of Christopher Columbus and other Europeans as the “Pre-Columbian” period.

Columbus touched on the Venezuelan coast in 1498, while other explorers landed on Colombia’s Caribbean coast in 1499. In the 16th century, Spanish explorers conquered much of the Americas, seeking wealth, enhanced social status, and the spread Catholicism. They encountered the Incas in 1532 then conquered the territories of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia by 1541. In 1543 the Spanish crown officially colonized all the Andean Ridge territories, uniting the entire region as the Viceroyalty of Peru. The Spanish dominated the region for approximately 300 years, importing African slaves to extract resources such as silver and gold to enrich Spain.

Starting in the 18th century, local leaders sought autonomy from the Spanish Crown. While initial revolts were unsuccessful, revolutionary fervor spread in the colonies. In the early 19th century, Venezuelan aristocrat Simón Bolívar led revolutionary forces that won the independence of the entire Andean Ridge. The territories of modern Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador defeated the Spanish in 1819, forming Gran Colombia. Peru defeated the Spanish Army in 1824, followed closely by Bolivia in 1825. The union of Gran Colombia was not long-lasting: Venezuela and Ecuador seceded in 1830, becoming independent countries. Although Panama and Colombia remained united for some 70 years, Panama gained independence with the aid of the US in 1903.

Since independence, the Andean Ridge nations have suffered from territorial competition, political upheaval, and poor governance. A series of strongmen ruled Venezuela until a political coalition instituted 2-party rule in 1958. In Colombia a two-party system emerged after 1849 that has endured into the 21st century despite violent civil wars and insurgencies. Ecuador experienced internal instability and military rule before returning to civilian rule in 1979. In the 19th century, Peru and Bolivia vacillated between different forms of government before establishing civilian rule in 1980 and 1982, respectively. Today, facing challenges from left and right extremists, the Andean Ridge nations still struggle to maintain stable governance.

2. Political and Social Relations

Political relations are the ways in which members of a community organize leadership, power, and authority. Social relations are all of the ways in which individuals are linked to others in their community. The Andean Ridge was home to some of Latin America's first organized societies, such as the coastal fishing villages that formed as early as 5000 BC. Later, with the advent of agriculture, communities developed along river valleys and in the mountains. Stable food sources led to trade and the formation of civilizations.

Spanish conquest and colonialism drastically changed society in the Andean Ridge. Local populations were decimated by conflict, forced labor, and new diseases brought by the Spanish. These included smallpox, measles, typhoid, and influenza. Historians estimate that the indigenous Andean population, roughly 10 million prior to the Spanish conquest, had decreased to just 600,000 by 1620. To replace the diminishing indigenous workforce, the Spanish imported tens of thousands of African slaves to the region.

This colonial history laid the foundations of the region's current-day ethnic and racial compositions. Today, people of *mestizo* (mixed European and Pre-Columbian indigenous ancestry) and *mulatto* (mixed African and European ancestry) heritage are common in the region. Mestizos form majority populations in Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador. The legacy of Spanish colonialism continues to influence social relations in the region, as white and mestizo populations hold most of the wealth and political power. Indigenous, black, and mulatto residents tend to be poorer, although they have become more politically and socially active since the 1980s.

The Andean nations are in various stages of development. Colombia continues its long history of two-party rule and in 2012 entered peace talks with domestic insurgents. In Ecuador, protesters have ousted three of the last five elected Presidents, although former President Correa survived into his 2nd term. Peru has enjoyed relative stability since the 1990s, while Bolivia elected populist Evo Morales President in 2005 and reelected him in 2009, 2014, and 2019. In 2022, Gustavo Francisco Petro Urrego was elected president with a 50.4% vote in a second-round vote

Venezuela is headed by Nicolas Maduro, successor of the controversial Hugo Chavez: a populist, anti-capitalist, and anti-US President who from 1999 to 2013 nationalized industries and implemented large scale social programs. Under Chavez,

Venezuela sought closer relations with Caribbean nations, particularly Cuba, and supported expansion of a trade alliance among Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Caribbean nations as an alternative to a proposed US regional free trade agreement.

Although relations among the Andean nations are generally friendly, Peru and Ecuador have a longstanding rivalry, as do Venezuela and Colombia. Colombia's conflict with domestic insurgents spread into Venezuela and Ecuador during the early 21st century, temporarily straining relations among those nations. Illicit cocaine production is a major transnational problem, especially for Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia.

Over the past 2 decades, the Andean nations have increasingly integrated with the South American regional community. For example, the Andean nations are active members of the Union of South American Nations (*Unión de Naciones Suramericanas*, UNASUR), an organization founded to address common political, economic, social, and security issues. The US has strong economic and security interests in the Andean Ridge, where it provides aid, promotes democracy, and cooperates on counter-narcotics efforts. Likewise, China has developed economic and political links with the region.

3. Religion and Spirituality

Religion is a cultural belief system that provides meaning to members of a community. Religious and spiritual beliefs help preserve the social order by defining proper behavior. They also create social unity by defining shared identity, offer individuals peace of mind, and explain the causes of events in a society.

Regional Pre-Columbian populations practiced a variety of ceremonies, beliefs, and practices related to spirits and deities who inhabited the natural environment. When the Spanish conquerors arrived, they encountered the Inca's complex belief system that included worship of several important deities, such as Viracocha, the creator god, and Inti, the sun god.

Christianity arrived in the Andean Ridge with the Spanish, who introduced Catholicism beginning in the 16th century. As Catholicism spread, it eventually became nearly universal in the Spanish colonies. The Catholic Church became entrenched in colonial life, influencing education, social services, and colonial policy. Today, the Catholic Church remains a powerful influence on politics and an important part of community life.

Catholicism remains the dominant religion in the region with 48% or more of Bolivians, Ecuadorians, Colombians, and Venezuelans identifying as Catholic. While most of the remaining population identifies as Christian Protestant, some countries also have small Jewish, Baha'i, and Mormon communities. Of note, indigenous beliefs and practices are still important to many residents of the Andean Ridge today. While some people adhere solely to traditional beliefs and practices, others incorporate them with Christian practices.

4. Family and Kinship

The domain of family and kinship refers to groups of people related through blood ties, marriage, or through strong emotional bonds that influence them to treat each other like family members (often called "fictive kin").

Family life and relationships are highly valued throughout the Andean Ridge. While the traditional family unit consists of a husband, wife, and their children, extended kin on both sides of the family are highly influential in family matters. Accordingly, extended family groups often live close together. Children generally live with their parents until they marry and typically have several godparents who provide support and career opportunities later in life. While inheritance traditionally passed from father to son or son-in-law, under modern laws, women may own and inherit property.

While close family ties mean family members have some influence over their children's choice of spouses, men and women generally choose their own partners. Both Spanish traditions and Roman Catholic teachings strongly value marriage as an institution and discourage divorce. Nevertheless, divorce rates are rising while marriage rates are dropping as women gain social and economic independence.

A growing rural-urban divide in economic and educational opportunities across the Andean Ridge results in notable differences in rural and urban family life. While the traditional family structure remains common in rural areas, in urban centers family structures have become much more diverse.

5. Sex and Gender

Sex refers to the biological/reproductive differences between males and females, while gender is a more flexible concept that refers to a culture's categorizing of masculine and feminine behaviors, symbols, and social roles.

The Andean Ridge's traditional Spanish and indigenous cultures privilege the male's role as provider and leader. ***Machismo***, or masculine behavior and pride, is an important element of male identity in the region. By contrast, these cultures traditionally cast women in subordinate domestic roles. Women have acquired equal rights under the law in such areas as property ownership and suffrage. Nevertheless, social, economic, and political inequalities between genders remain.

Despite most countries' progressive gender equality laws and policies, women face continued challenges to their participation in the workforce. In much of the region, women still assume the traditional roles of wives and mothers, oftentimes facing the challenges of balancing domestic duties with employment in the workforce. Moreover, women often face gender discrimination in hiring and promotion processes. With the exception of Venezuela at 43%, Andean Ridge women who do work typically are paid just 63%-77% as much as men.

Women also face challenges to their participation in the political sector. While Ecuador and Bolivia have established quotas (42% and 25% respectively) for female representation in their national parliaments, women's participation in local politics across the region is much lower. In 2022, women accounted for just 6% of elected mayors in Peru, less than 10% in Ecuador, and 11% in in Colombia.

Homosexuality is legal throughout the region. Civil unions between homosexual couples are recognized in Ecuador and Colombia. Every country except Peru has some type of anti-discrimination legislation. Nevertheless, homosexuals still suffer discrimination, stigmatization, and violence in some areas.

6. Language and Communication

Language is a system for sharing information symbolically, whereby words are used to represent ideas. Communication is defined as the cultural practice of sharing meaning in interaction, both verbally and non-verbally.

As a result of Spanish colonialism, Spanish is an official language throughout the Andean Ridge and is spoken by most of the population. Despite the dominance of Spanish, the Andean Ridge is linguistically diverse: 95 languages are spoken in Peru, 89 in Colombia, 44 in Venezuela, 43 in Bolivia, and 24 in Ecuador. While almost all of these languages are indigenous forms, a few are so-called creoles, languages that developed from a combination of English or Spanish with an indigenous variety.

The two most widely spoken indigenous languages in the region are Quechua (the language of the Incas) and Aymara. Peru recognizes these two tongues as official languages, while Bolivia recognizes all indigenous languages as official, including extinct languages. English is taught in most schools and is also popular in the business community.

While some Pre-Columbian civilizations in Mexico and Central America developed written language, those in the Andean Ridge did not. The Incas did develop a complex system of record-keeping, called the ***quipu,*** which used knots tied in ropes to record numerical quantities.

In their oral communication, Andean people, particularly members of indigenous communities, tend to be reserved and unemotional. They also value respect and modesty in interpersonal relations.

7. Learning and Knowledge

All cultures require that the older generation transmit important information to the younger generation. This information can be strictly factual (for example, how to fulfill subsistence and health requirements) and culturally traditional (the beliefs, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning to the community). This knowledge transfer may occur through structured, formalized systems such as schools or through informal learning by watching adults or peers.

Education in Pre-Columbian societies was primarily informal, as children learned skills and traditions from their parents and relatives. Scholars believe the Incas employed a more formal education system to instruct male nobles in martial skills, Quechua language, religion, history, and the use of the *quipu*. Women selected to marry nobility also attended formal schools and were taught religion, spinning, weaving, cooking, and brewing.

During the first decades of the colonial period, the Spanish introduced formal education systems that taught indigenous elites Catholic beliefs, Spanish, and “a useful skill” to support the colonists. The Catholic Church was the primary provider of education in the region throughout the colonial period, establishing many schools and universities. By the late 17th century, Spanish interest in educating indigenous students waned, and most schools accepted only Spanish elites.

In the late 19th century, educational opportunities for women and indigenous groups began to expand. Today, education is valued and increasingly accessible throughout the region. Primary education enrollment rates are high, ranging from 93% in Colombia to 99% in Peru. Adult literacy rates are above 94% in all Andean countries. Nevertheless, the Andean Ridge nations still struggle to extend secondary and tertiary education access to all their citizens.

8. Time and Space

In every society, people occupy space and time in ways that are not directly linked to physical survival. In most western cultures, people tend to be preoccupied with strict time management, devoting less effort to relationship-building. By contrast, in most Andean Ridge cultures, establishing and maintaining relationships with others can take precedence over accomplishing a task in the most efficient manner.

Concepts of personal space differ from those in the US. During conversations, regional residents often stand closer than most Americans do. They also may ask personal questions about family, relationships, and employment as a means of demonstrating polite interest. Men and women may interact differently than Americans are used to. For example, men shake hands both in greeting and parting, while a woman may greet a man with a kiss on one cheek.

Andean Ridge residents also manage time differently. While they may expect foreigners to arrive on time to business meetings, regional residents typically arrive 15-30 minutes late. Similarly, social gatherings generally start half an hour or more after the scheduled time; hosts may even consider on-time arrival rude. While the workday runs on a schedule similar to the US, lunchtime is generally a mid-day break of around 2 hours, during which shops and businesses may close.

The rhythm of daily life typically changes during national holidays and local celebrations. For example, Quito, Ecuador celebrates Founders Day in early December with a week of festivals, parades, and sporting events. Towns and cities throughout the region celebrate Carnival, an annual celebration prior to Christian Lent.

9. Aesthetics and Recreation

Every culture has its own forms of creative expression that are guided by aesthetic principles of imagination, beauty, skill and style. Most of the Andean Ridge's forms of artistic expression – including its art, architecture, dance, music, and theater – reflect a combination of Spanish, indigenous, and African influences.

For example, in Peru, a cathedral features Incan religious symbols; some indigenous dances satirize the Spanish invaders; and both European and indigenous influences inspire Peruvian sculpture and painting. In Colombia, a traditional dance style mimics the shuffling steps of African slaves in chains.

Dance and music infuse daily living in the Andean Ridge. Many regions lay claim to unique indigenous or *mestizo* musical styles, such as ***yaravi*** from Peru. Ecuadorians have adopted the ***pasillo***, a style of ballad from the north Andes, as their national music. Afro-Caribbean culture has pervaded the Venezuelan and Colombian sea coasts, influencing music and dance in those areas.

Traditional handicrafts such as weaving, sculpture, and ceramics have been revived in recent decades. The region has produced many contemporary novelists and poets who explore their unique cultural heritage. Many have achieved international fame, including Gabriel García Márquez, a Colombian author who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982.

Soccer is unquestionably the most popular sport in the Andean Ridge. Many regional residents avidly follow professional soccer and are amateur players themselves. Bullfighting, an inheritance of Spanish culture, is also popular in most of the region.

10. Sustenance and Health

Societies have different methods of transforming natural resources into food. These methods can shape residence patterns, family structures, and economics. Theories of disease and healing practices exist in all cultures and serve as adaptive responses to disease and illness.

Cuisine varies widely in the region depending on local products and tastes. In the highlands, potatoes and grains, along with meat from llamas, guinea pigs, chicken, and fish are common. Along the coast, fresh seafood, tomatoes, onions, spicy peppers, and rice or cassava (a tuberous starchy root, high in carbohydrates and essential to Caribbean and other tropical diets) are popular. ***Ceviche*** (raw fish marinated in lemon juice and herbs) is popular in many areas, both along the coast and inland.

Communicable diseases remain a concern in the Andean Ridge. In 2023, the countries reported about 32 cases of malaria per 1,000 people and, in 2023, 326 cases of dengue fever (a debilitating disease also spread by mosquitos) per 100,000 were reported with the highest number of cases in Peru followed by Bolivia. In addition, an average of 15% of Andean Ridge rural residents lack access to clean drinking water, a situation which facilitates widespread outbreaks of diarrhea, parasitic fever, and hepatitis. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is low with the new infection rate relatively stable over the last decade.

Andean Ridge countries face many challenges in providing healthcare to their populations. Significant disparities in health

and access to healthcare exist between urban and rural communities. Some rural communities lack even basic healthcare infrastructure. Similarly, large urban slums, common in major cities, often have no sanitation or health infrastructure.

11. Economics and Resources

This domain refers to beliefs regarding appropriate ways for a society to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services. A number of Pre-Columbian Andean populations lived in hunter/gatherer societies or practiced subsistence agriculture and herding. Larger and wealthier civilizations, particularly the Inca, produced luxury items such as ceramics, art, jewelry, and fine woven goods for local consumption and regional trade.

Spanish colonists developed mineral extraction and refining industries to increase Spain's wealth, doing little to build local industry. For example, colonial governments emphasized exploitation of the region's large silver and lesser gold deposits. They developed agriculture and other local industries primarily to support the mining industry. Spanish colonists also farmed large estates with forced indigenous or African slave labor, more as a sign of status and privilege as economic pursuit.

After independence, political instability throughout the region hampered economic development. In addition, countries experienced several boom-bust cycles as they exported non-renewable resources and commodities that left them vulnerable to swings in the market. For example, Bolivia transitioned from focusing on silver extraction in the 19th century to tin mining in the 20th, and then natural gas since the 1970s. By contrast, Ecuador experienced

its first boom late in the 19th century, exporting cacao, followed by bananas in the early 20th century, and then oil starting in the 1960s.

Although Venezuela had been the largest economy in the region, turbulent politics and vulnerability to oil market volatility have created economic instability. Colombia's economy, the region's largest, is diversified across the agricultural, industrial, and mining sectors. Peru's economy is also relatively diverse, with gold, zinc, copper, textiles, and fish meal as its major exports. Ecuador has a large agricultural sector and oil industry, while Bolivia, the poorest nation in the region, remains largely dependent on mining and natural gas. A large illicit economy based on cocaine production also exists in the region, particularly in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia.

The region's economies were affected by the 2008 global financial crisis to different degrees. The crisis generally reduced demand for Andean Ridge exports and slowed investment in the region. Bolivia experienced few adverse economic effects, while Peru and Colombia underwent relatively minor economic contractions. By contrast, Venezuela's economy contracted for two-years and has been slower to recover.

12. Technology and Material

Societies use technology to transform their physical world, and culture heavily influences the development and use of technology. Since the end of the colonial period, as Andean Ridge economies have developed at different rates, modern technology has spread unevenly through the region.

Roads form the primary transportation infrastructure throughout the region. While Venezuela has one of the best road systems in Latin America, in most of the region, paved roads are restricted to urban areas and select major highways. Mountainous terrain and poor-quality roads make road travel slow and dangerous in some areas.

While Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela all have major Caribbean or Pacific Sea ports, Bolivia is land-locked. Rail infrastructure is poor and neglected throughout the region.

Information technology is spreading rapidly throughout the Andean Ridge. Between 2017 and 2023, Internet usage grew to an average of 71% across the 5 countries. Mobile phone use grew even more rapidly: while most countries reported subscription rates of around 5 per 100 people in 2000, by 2022, subscriptions had increased to an average of 108 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants.

The Andean Ridge countries have a wealth of energy resources. Hydropower is a major source of electricity due to the many mountain rivers in the region; both Colombia and Peru generate 62% and 50% of their electricity through hydropower, respectively. Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela also have oil and natural gas reserves, which serve as both a domestic energy source and a major export. The US is the main trading partner for most of the region and seeks to develop and expand free trade agreements. Chinese trade relations have grown to become second only to the US in several countries, and China now surpasses the US as a destination for Peruvian exports. Regional trade is also strong and bolstered by Union of South American Nations' (USAN) trade agreements. Domestic instability, disputes with heavy-handed foreign multinationals, and a history of nationalization of private industry sometimes hinder the growth of trade.

Now that we have introduced general concepts that characterize Andean Ridge society at large, we will focus on specific features of Peruvian society.

PART 2 – CULTURE SPECIFIC

1. HISTORY AND MYTH

Overview

Located along South America's western coast, Peru was home to the expansive Inca Empire and several other well-established indigenous cultures prior to becoming a colony in Spain's global empire. After Peru gained independence in 1824, political upheaval plagued the country, with regular military coups interrupting periods of civilian rule until 1992. Peru's democratic institutions and economy have strengthened since unpopular President Alberto Fujimori fled the country in 2000, but the nation remains politically unstable and polarized.

Early History

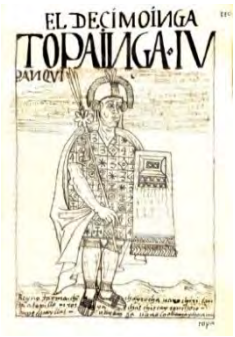
Archeological evidence indicates that humans first inhabited present-day Peru around 15,000 years ago. Local inhabitants likely formed small coastal settlements around 7000 BC. The development of agriculture and domestication of ***guanacos*** and ***vicuñas*** (South American camelids that are ancestors of llamas and alpacas) allowed for communities to grow. One of the oldest cities in the Americas, Caral (on Peru's central coast), reached an estimated population of 3,000 around 2600 BC. The Chavín culture, one of the first in Peru to produce recognizable products (see *Economics and Resources*), emerged in the Andean highlands and built a large religious complex in Chavín de Huántar around 900 BC.

Later, the Nazca people of southern Peru grew in prominence. Between 200 BC-600 AD, they developed complex underground irrigation systems, textiles, and the Nazca Lines (see *Religion and Spirituality*). Along the northern coast, the Moche (or

Mochica) built large pyramid-like temples, such as Sipán, and developed an influential artisan class that specialized in pottery and metalworking. Both groups were succeeded by the Huari (or Wari) and Tiahuanaco civilizations, whose influence extended from northern Peru to present-day Bolivia between 600-1000 AD. Between 1000-1350, the Sicán, Chimú, Chincha, Chancay, and other civilizations inhabited the region. The Chimú built the city of Chan Chan on Peru's northern coast in the 13th century. The world's largest ***adobe*** (clay) city, it was South America's biggest city in the pre-Columbian era.

The Inca Empire

While Incan myths detail a long lineage of semi-mythical kings, one of the first verified ***Sapa Inca*** (Incan rulers) was Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui, who began his rule around 1438. Based in the Andean highlands, Pachacuti greatly expanded the Incan territory, acquiring land between present-day Quito (Ecuador's capital) and Lake Titicaca in southern Peru. Likewise, Incan accounts attribute the planning and expansion of Cuzco, the Incan capital city, to this *Sapa Inca*.



Pachacuti's son, Topa (or Túpac) Inca Yupanqui succeeded him as king and consolidated Incan control over the region. Under the rule of Topa (1471-93) and his son, Huayna Capac (1493-1525), the Incas expanded to the Angasmayo River (the modern border between Ecuador and Colombia) in the North, and the highlands of present-day Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina in the South.

The Incas managed their empire efficiently. They built a complex system of roads and irrigation canals (see *Economics and Resources*), while employing an advanced accounting system and governing bureaucracy (see *Learning and Knowledge*). Nevertheless, the spread of disease on the continent from early contact with Spanish colonists and power struggles over leadership of the empire weakened the Incas just as the Europeans began their conquest of the region.

Arrival of the Spanish

Fueled by stories of vast Incan wealth, Spanish ***conquistadores*** (conquerors) led by Francisco Pizarro set off from present-day Panama in late 1531, reaching the Inca Empire the following year. The Spanish met with Atahualpa, son of Huayna Capac and the reigning *Sapa Inca,* in the northern city of Cajamarca. Dismissive of the relatively small invasion force, Atahualpa met with Pizarro largely unarmed, and the Spanish took him hostage.

Soon after Atahualpa's capture, the Inca Empire began to collapse. Although the Incas paid a substantial ransom for the return of the *Sapa Inca*, the Spanish assassinated the ruler in 1533. In the same year, the Spanish continued south and occupied Cuzco, effectively ending Incan rule of western South America. Pizarro consolidated control and founded the coastal city of Lima (Peru's capital, see *Political and Social Relations*) in 1535.

Spanish Colonization

Infighting among the *conquistadores* and their indigenous allies marked the first decades of Spanish rule. Rivalries between Pizarro and others who participated in the conquest erupted over control of the lucrative ***encomienda*** (forced indigenous labor) system, resulting in multiple assassinations, notably that of Pizarro in 1544. Spain reasserted control of the new colony by appointing Francisco de Toledo as Viceroy in 1569. From Lima, Toledo outmaneuvered the *conquistador* families for control of the colony, repelled a series of indigenous revolts, and ordered the execution of then-Inca leader Túpac Amaru in 1572.

The Viceroyalty of Peru

Under Spanish control, the Viceroyalty of Peru grew wealthy and powerful. The administrative center of most of Spain's holdings in South America, Lima became home to an extremely class-conscious society. At the top of the hierarchy were Spaniards, called ***peninsulares***, who wielded most economic and political

power and had significant social prestige. Next were the ***criollos*** (Spanish people born in the Americas), then the ***mestizos*** (people of mixed Spanish and indigenous descent). Although indigenous Peruvians maintained autonomy in some areas, they and enslaved Africans were at the bottom of Peru's colonial hierarchy.

In the late 16th and 17th centuries, Lima underwent a cultural blossoming, attracting wealthy colonists, merchants, artisans, scholars, and Roman Catholic clergy (see *Religion and Spirituality*), among other groups of people. Nevertheless, forced indigenous and African labor, particularly in the silver mines of present-day Bolivia and on coastal plantations, respectively, generated much of the wealth wielded by colonial society.

Colonial Decline: Spain's decline as a global power in the 18th century impacted Peru, which endured economic stagnation due to less direct trade with Europe (see *Economics and Resources*). The Spanish reorganized their colonial holdings to reduce the power that *criollo* elite had begun to wield locally. The changes meant that the Viceroyalty of Peru lost control over land in present-day Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, and Ecuador. This loss of lucrative natural resources strained relations between the Spanish monarchy and Peruvian *criollos*, many of whom were increasingly exposed to the Enlightenment ideals of democracy and self-governance. In the southern Andes, Túpac Amaru II led a rebellion against the Spanish. While Spain defeated the rebels, executed Amaru II in 1781, and stifled indigenous culture, Amaru II became a symbol in liberation and indigenous movements.

The Struggle for Independence

Political changes in early 19th-century Europe affected Spain's colonies. In 1808, French Emperor Napoleon I removed Spanish King Ferdinand VII from the throne and appointed his own brother as King of Spain. While many *criollos* in Spain's other

colonies seized the opportunity to declare independence, Peru's position as the center of Spanish control in South America made residents hesitant to follow their neighbors' lead.

Nevertheless, military leaders from other colonies soon brought the independence movement to Peru. In 1820, Argentine General José de San Martín landed in the southern port of Pisco, pushing Spanish forces into the Andean highlands. San Martín and his troops captured Lima the following year, declaring Peruvian independence on July 28, 1821. Nevertheless, San Martín was unable to dislodge the Spanish from the interior of the newly established country. Instead, he withdrew to allow Venezuelan General Simón Bolívar, who had recently liberated northern South America, to at last defeat the Spanish. At the battles of Junín and Ayacucho, Bolívar finally ended European control of Peru in 1824.

Brief Military Rule and Confederation with Bolivia

Bolívar's departure in 1826 led to instability in Peru, as Spain's previous refusal to allow *criollos* to serve in administrative roles had hindered the development of a Peruvian governing class. Peru's lack of trained civilian leaders resulted in periodic military rule, as generals frequently took control of weak governments, despite periodic elections. These generals ruled the country during the first decades of independence and would repeatedly interrupt periods of democratic rule in subsequent years.

Likewise, Peru's dependence on commodity exports created economic instability (see *Economics and Resources*). Frequent fluctuations of commodity prices led to wide swings in revenue, causing political turmoil throughout Peru's history.

Despite the objections of some elite, in 1836, Peru joined Bolivia in a confederation to create a regional political and economic power. As the new political entity threatened Chilean merchants to the south, Peruvian dissidents joined Chile in a two-year war against the confederation that caused its dissolution in 1839.

Advances Under Ramón Castilla

The 1845 election of Ramón Castilla temporarily ended the country's political upheaval. The new President took office during a boom in global demand for guano (bat and seabird excrement used as fertilizer) and nitrates (see *Economics and Resources*). Castilla used the economic windfall to develop the country by reducing foreign debt, building a public school system (see *Learning and Knowledge*), and expanding the roadways network. After leaving office in 1851, Castilla led an uprising in 1855 to reclaim power, which he held until 1862. The President also enacted important social changes, eliminating a harsh tribute system on indigenous Peruvians, outlawing enslavement of Africans, and dissolving Roman Catholic religious courts.

Around this time, the first waves of Chinese laborers began to settle in Peru, largely working on plantations and in mines. After subsequent waves of Chinese immigrants moved to Peru during the next century, ***tusán*** (Chinese Peruvians) became a significant minority (see *Political and Social Relations*).

Renewed Challenges

After Castilla left office, Peru became politically unstable once again. Adding to internal challenges, in 1864, Spain mounted an attempt to reclaim some influence in its former colonies. While Peru, Ecuador, and Chile created a military alliance to defeat the Spanish, the war effort strained Peru's economy.

War of the Pacific: After about 15 years of peace and internal development, regional disagreements again thrust Peru into an armed conflict. As global demand for silver and nitrates soared in the 1870s, Chilean companies sought access to mines in Peru's Atacama Desert, which proved increasingly difficult after Peru nationalized its nitrate mines in 1875. The Chilean desire

for Peruvian land, coupled with the discovery of a secret alliance between Peru and Bolivia, led Peru to war with Chile in 1879.

The war proved catastrophic for Peru, which was overwhelmed by Chile's superior military. Shortly after the war began, Peru lost a major battle for control of the Atacama, which allowed the Chilean Navy to raid Peru's coast. In 1881, Chile overran and looted Lima, marking a low point of Peru's regional influence. The conflict ended in 1883, as Peru relinquished control of much of the valuable Atacama and one of its southern provinces.

Financial Difficulties: The War of the Pacific ruined Peru's finances, and high debt payments on foreign loans worsened fiscal difficulties. The Civilian Party, comprising mainly wealthy landowners and merchants, came to power in 1889 and enacted austere economic policies. Under an arrangement with foreign creditors, Peru lost many rights to mine its guano deposits and operate domestic railways. While it preserved the country's financial standing, the agreement was wildly unpopular.

Democratic Rule

Discontent with the Civilian Party led to the creation of the Democratic Party, a center-left group with support from many working-class Peruvians. Its founder, Nicolás de Piérola, won the election in 1895 and began a wide-ranging social rights program.

Despite the Democratic Party's initial electoral success, the Civilian Party returned to power in 1899. In 1908, under the Presidency of Augusto Bernardino Leguía y Salcedo, Peru's economy grew rapidly, as cotton, copper, sugar, and wool exports brought the country significant revenue due to increased demand from the US and Europe (see *Economics and Resources*). During this period, Japanese immigrants began to settle in Peru, mostly in Lima. While significantly smaller than the *tusán* community, the ***nikkei*** (Japanese Peruvians) worked in similar industries.

The APRA: In 1924, exiled former student leader Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre founded the ***Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*** (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance, or APRA). The political movement denounced US involvement in Latin America and advocated increased indigenous rights and a centrally planned economy. The APRA won the support of indigenous communities and urban intellectuals and quickly became a powerful political force.

Return of Military Rule

In the early 1930s, the Great Depression reduced demand for Peruvian commodities, straining the economy. Unable to maintain the support of the wealthy, Leguía had become increasingly unpopular when General Luis Sánchez Cerro ousted him in a coup in 1930. Sánchez Cerro defeated Haya de la Torre in the 1931 elections, which the APRA claimed were fraudulent, and became Peru's first President with indigenous ancestry. Frustrated by their defeat, APRA members mounted an armed uprising in Trujillo. Sánchez Cerro ordered the shelling and capture of the city, killing APRA partisans. In response, APRA sympathizers assassinated Sánchez Cerro in 1933.

The Benavides Administration: General Oscar Benavides took power after Sánchez Cerro, using his position to strengthen Peru's economy, which was suffering from the global economic downturn. The President continued state-led oppression of the APRA, persecuting its leaders after declaring the party illegal and co-opting some APRA social policies to weaken its support.

World War II (WWII)

The 1939 outbreak of WWII, which was fought between the Allies (Britain, France, the US, and the Soviet Union, among others) and Axis powers (Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan) was profitable for Peru, as the war increased the need for Peruvian products. The country's newly elected President, Manuel Prado, capitalized on the economic boom and an endorsement from the APRA to consolidate his control of the country.

The relative political stability allowed for a return to a more representative democracy. In 1945, the socially liberal José Luis Bustamante y Rivero won the Presidency with wide-ranging support from both upper-middle class Peruvians and the APRA. In the legislature (see *Political and Social Relations*), which at that time had two chambers, the APRA won a plurality in both. Nevertheless, Rivero ruled independently, angering APRA members, who mounted an armed uprising against the central government in the port city of Callao, near Lima, in 1948.

Manuel Odría

In late 1948, General Manuel Odría launched a coup as an answer to the turmoil that the APRA uprising had caused. The new President quickly took authoritarian measures, jailing or exiling political opponents, dissolving the legislature, and declaring martial law. Odría achieved initial economic successes, benefitting from exports of Peruvian goods, such as cotton and copper, during the United Nations involvement in the Korean War (1950-53).

Nevertheless, the economic boom ended shortly after the fall in demand due to end of the Korean War, leaving Peru saddled with rising inflation. Faced with widespread discontent, Odría allowed for the return of competitive elections in 1956.

Brief Democratic Rule

In 1956, Manuel Prado, with support from Odría, won reelection. While Prado halted Peru's economic crisis, many indigenous and working-class Peruvians were excluded from the economic growth. Largescale discontent led to an inconclusive election in 1962, with no party earning enough votes to claim victory. In response, the military seized control of the government and organized a second round of elections under their supervision.

Fernando Belaúnde Terry, head of the left-leaning ***Acción Popular*** (Popular Action) Party obtained significant support from the APRA's electoral base and won the second election. During his term, the government increased social spending, redistributed unused or underused land to landless indigenous

farmhands, reformed Peru's public educational system (see *Learning and Knowledge*), and invested in the country's physical infrastructure (see *Technology and Material*).

Military Rule

In October 1968, the military once again seized power, ousting President Belaúnde Terry. General Juan Velasco Alvarado led the military junta that imposed a policy of "economic nationalism" (see *Economics and Resources*), seeking direct control of the country's plantations, mines, and oil corporations. While this policy strained relations with the US, it was popular among many Peruvians. The government developed irrigation projects in Peru's desert areas (see *Political and Social Relations*) and instituted new educational reforms (see *Learning and Knowledge*). Despite these measures, the junta maintained tight control through political repression, closed media outlets that were critical of military rule, and suspended many other rights.

The Second Junta: In the early 1970s, an economic downturn, particularly due to the collapse of Peru's fishing industry, jeopardized the military's hold on power. In 1975, a second junta formed without General Alvarado and began to pursue less centralized economic policies and friendlier relations with the US. The second junta paved the way for a return to civilian rule, calling a constituent assembly in 1978. The APRA won the largest share of seats in the new assembly, and Haya de la Torre became the body's President. After the new Constitution was passed in 1979, elections were called in 1980.

A Troubled Democracy

While many hoped Haya de la Torre would lead his party to political victory for the first time in 1980, his unexpected death resulted in Belaúnde Terry's reelection for a second term. The President ushered in a less restrictive period, allowing independent news outlets to operate, and reducing centralized economic policy. However, as had occurred during previous governments, Peru's reliance on exporting primary goods,

combined with low commodity prices, sent the newly democratic country into another economic crisis that primarily impacted poor, working-class, rural, and indigenous Peruvians (see *Economics and Resources*).

Insurgent Groups: During the administration of Belaúnde Terry, several anti-government groups won control in rural areas, particularly in southern and central Andean Peru. The largest of these, the Communist Party of Peru, better known as ***Sendero Luminoso*** (Shining Path), and the ***Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru*** (Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, or MRTA), advocated radical communist ideologies to empower the traditionally marginalized indigenous rural communities (see *Political and Social Relations*). In the 1980s, both groups engaged in armed conflict with the military, while conducting assassinations and bombings in urban areas meant to target Peru's white elite. The cost of combating these groups led to social and economic chaos.

The APRA Takes Power: Over 50 years after its founding, the APRA's candidate for the Presidency, Alán García, was elected in 1985. The President inherited a weak economy and internal conflict, making his position precarious. Despite reducing crime, García's economic plans drew condemnation from international lenders, further destabilizing Peru's financial sector and jeopardizing access to foreign markets. García was unable to control the economy and became less popular as inflation and worker strikes paralyzed the country in the late 1980s.

Alberto Fujimori

In 1990, Alberto Kenya Fujimori Inomoto was elected President, defeating the author Mario Vargas Llosa (see *Aesthetics and Recreation*). Fujimori, the son of Japanese immigrants, ran on populist economic policies that garnered the support of indigenous and low-income Peruvians. Upon taking office, he reversed course and enacted a series of dramatic economic

measures meant to stabilize inflation, notably raising the price of gasoline by 3,000%, which had a detrimental impact on the country's poor (see *Economics and Resources*). Around the same time, the Shining Path had spread from the Andes. In 1992, its members publicly murdered the popular activist María Elena Moyano, marking a decline in support for the group.

The *Autogolpe*: In the same year, faced with a lack of support in Congress amid continuing economic difficulties and violent confrontations with Peru's insurgent groups, Fujimori and the military launched an ***autogolpe*** (self-coup). Fujimori dissolved Congress, called for a new Constitution, and declared a state of emergency. The new Constitution and legislature that took effect in 1993 gave Fujimori the freedom to pursue extensive market-oriented economic policies and aggressive action against the Shining Path insurgency.

While initially popular, many of the President's economic policies negatively affected Peru's poor. Claims of human rights abuses against civilians during the fight against the Shining Path, especially in indigenous communities, were widespread. By Fujimori's second term (1995-2000), the government was using the military and intelligence services to silence political opposition, arbitrarily detain activists, and bribe lawmakers. Despite a military victory over the Shining Path and MRTA, deteriorating civil liberties eroded public confidence in the Fujimori government.

Return to Democracy

Fujimori won a third term in 2000, running virtually unopposed in elections that observers widely criticized as fraudulent. In late 2000, evidence that the President's close allies had bribed lawmakers emerged, leading Fujimori to flee Peru for Japan, where he resigned as President. Congress subsequently declared Fujimori "morally unfit" for office.

After a caretaker government, Alejandro Toledo was elected President in 2001. Toledo, ethnically Quechua (see *Political and Social Relations*), was initially popular. However, a recession

and confrontations with the legislature soon affected his administration, leading to a steep drop in public confidence. Toledo's term marked the start of a period of polarization in Peru, with Presidents and the legislature often at odds, hampering the government's capacity to pass legislation and lowering support for both entities (see *Political and Social Relations*).

During Toledo's administration, the government convened a truth and reconciliation commission to investigate crimes during the two decades of armed insurgency. The commission found that some 70,000 Peruvians died in the conflict, shocking many, as previous estimates had been much lower. In 2005, Fujimori returned from Japan to neighboring Chile, seeking to run for office in Peru's 2006 elections. Shortly after his arrival, Fujimori was extradited to Peru, where he faced charges of corruption, fraud, and human rights abuses. Over several trials, Fujimori was condemned to 35 years in prison.

The APRA's Return: In 2006, Alán García won a second term in office. His efforts to sign a free trade agreement with the US (see *Political and Social Relations*) led him to authorize foreign exploitation of natural resources in Amazonian Peru, making him unpopular with many residents. General strikes and massive protests in 2009 paralyzed García's administration, hampering much of his domestic agenda.

Humala and Kuczynski: In 2011, Ollanta Humala was elected President with the support of many left-leaning parties that sought to block the candidacy of Fujimori's daughter, Keiko. Humala governed as an independent, earning the disdain of liberal and conservative political parties alike, despite presiding over a relatively strong economy (see *Economics and Resources*). The public perception that Humala favored business interests over environmental efforts led to a decline in his popularity, which was compounded by Congress blocking many of his policy proposals.

In 2016, Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, a banker from Lima, narrowly defeated Keiko Fujimori to become President. Kuczynski's

administration faced political difficulties, as Fujimori's party, ***Fuerza Popular*** (Popular Force, see Political *and Social Relations*) had won a majority in Congress. Confrontations with the legislature continued amid allegations of corruption that emerged early on in Kuczynski's administration. A massive corruption scandal stemming from the Brazilian-owned company Odebrecht paying bribes to politicians across Latin America implicated not only Kuczynski, but every Peruvian President since the country's return to democracy in 2001. Amid these allegations, Kuczynski resigned in 2018 and was succeeded by his Ambassador to Canada, Martín Vizcarra.

Political Turmoil

Vizcarra pledged to implement wide-ranging anti-corruption policies in response to the scandals that gripped the Peruvian government. However, with about half of the legislature under investigation for corruption, Congress blocked many of the new President's proposals. Amid widespread discontent with the legislature, Vizcarra dissolved Congress and called new elections. Nevertheless, the newly elected body was unwilling to adopt the President's agenda and voted to remove Vizcarra from office after declaring him "morally incompetent" in late 2020.

Many Peruvians, who approved of Vizcarra's policies and were heavily impacted by the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (see *Sustenance and Health* and *Economics and Resources*), protested in the streets, ousting Peru's new interim government within a week. Francisco Sagasti, a pro-Vizcarra congressman, was appointed to lead the country until Peru's scheduled 2021 elections.

In June 2021, an indigenous schoolteacher, José Pedro Castillo Terrones, ran on leftist economic and conservative social policies to narrowly defeat Keiko Fujimori and become President. Despite Fujimori's claims of electoral fraud, Castillo took office promising to lead the country in a manner that would benefit Peru's marginalized communities.

Nevertheless, continuing pandemic-related hardships, inflation, and rapidly rising fuel prices caused Castillo's popularity to plummet soon after he took office, leading him to reshuffle his cabinet. In March 2022, massive protests calling for Castillo's ouster gripped Peru. In December 2022, Castillo announced plans to dissolve Congress which resulted in his impeachment and arrest. On December 7, 2022, Vice President Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra assumed the office of president. Boluarte is the first female president of Peru.

Myth Overview

In contrast to history, which is supposed to be an objective record of the past based on verifiable facts, myths embody a culture's values and often explain the origins of humans and the natural world. Myths are important because they provide a sense of unique heritage and identity. Some Peruvian myths helped to maintain indigenous traditions when faced with pressures to conform to Spanish culture in the colonial period.

The Pishtaco: Some indigenous Peruvian Quechua and Aymara communities trace the myth of the Pishtaco to Spain's conquest of Peru. The Pishtaco, generally portrayed as a white man with a blond beard, appears at night and is said to kill and steal the fat of his victims, which he then consumes or sells to merchants. The monster also uses this fat in Roman Catholic ceremonies (see *Religion and Spirituality*), to grease church bells and to make candles.

These tales proved particularly terrifying because fat was an important marker of life and frequently a component of religious offerings (see *Religion and Spirituality*) in many Incan communities. Today, some scholars claim that the myth of the Pishtaco was created to warn indigenous communities of the cruelty of the Spanish and to condemn local communities that were friendly to the European colonists.

2. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

Official Name
Republic of Peru
República del Perú
(Spanish)

Political Borders
Ecuador: 950 mi
Colombia: 928 mi
Brazil: 1,652 mi
Bolivia: 753 mi
Chile: 104 mi
Coastline: 1,500 mi

Capital
Lima

Demographics
Peru's population of about 32.6 million is growing at an annual rate of 0.5%. About 79% of the population lives in urban areas, with the highest density in the capital city of Lima and Callao, which together comprise a vast metropolitan area that is home to about a third of residents. Most Peruvians live in coastal, central, and southern Peru, while much of the northern and eastern Amazonian regions, except for the city of Iquitos, are sparsely settled.

Flag
Modified in 1950, the Peruvian flag consists of three equal, vertical bands with white in the center and red on both sides. The coat of arms, in the center of the white band, features a shield with a cornucopia of coins representing mineral wealth, a tropical Andean ***cinchona*** tree (the source of quinine) for flora, and a ***vicuña*** (a wild camelid similar to an alpaca) for fauna. The white band

symbolizes peace and red the blood shed for independence (see *History and Myth*).

Geography

Located in western South America, Peru borders Ecuador to the northwest, Colombia to the northeast, Brazil to the east, Bolivia to the southeast, Chile to the south, and the South Pacific Ocean to the west. Peru's total land area is 496,225 sq mi, almost twice the size of Texas.

Peru has three longitudinal regions, including a western coastal desert plain, the high and rugged central Andes Mountains (or Sierra), and the eastern lowland jungle of the Amazon Basin. Located in the western Andes Mountain range, Nevado Huascarán is Peru's highest peak at 22,205 ft. The Apurímac, Mantaro, Ene, Tambo, and Ucayli rivers originate in southern Peru before feeding into the Amazon River, the world's second-longest (3,977 mi), southwest of Iquitos before it flows into Brazil. Set in the Southeast and shared with Bolivia, Lake Titicaca is Peru's largest and South America's second-largest lake (3,200 sq mi). At 12,500 ft above sea level, it is the world's highest commercially navigable lake.

Climate

Peru has three climactic zones. The dry coastal belt experiences cloudy winters, warm summers, average temperatures ranging from 59-75˚F, and annual rainfall of about 6 in. The climate in the Andes varies by elevation. Average annual temperatures in the valleys range from 60-72˚F, while higher elevations are often much colder. The region has a cold season and rainy season with up to 39 in of annual rainfall. The Amazon region experiences a tropical climate with average temperatures between 70-91˚F and annual rainfall ranging from 39-118 in. Lima experiences warm, muggy summers and long, dry winters with average temperatures ranging from 59˚F in August to 81˚F in February.

Natural Hazards

Peru is located along the Ring of Fire, a belt of active volcanoes and earthquake epicenters bordering the Pacific Ocean, where up to 90% of the world's earthquakes and 75% of its volcanoes occur. The country is also vulnerable to tsunamis, flooding, landslides, and mild volcanic activity. In 2021, northern Peru experienced two severe earthquakes with magnitudes of 6.2 and 7.5 that resulted in a dozen deaths and over 800 injuries.

Environmental Issues

Deforestation from illegal logging, overgrazing on coastal and Andean slopes leading to soil erosion, desertification, pollution of rivers and coastal waters from municipal and mining waste, overfishing, and water scarcity cause significant environmental damage. Lima has some of Latin America's worst air quality.

For decades, Peruvians have protested environmental hazards caused by extractive industrial subsectors like mining, oil, and natural gas (see *Economics and Resources*). In 2022, about 10,000 barrels of oil leaked into the Pacific in Callao, which tarred 25 beaches and polluted three marine reserves. Peru has filed a suit against Spanish company Repsol for $4.5 billion.

Government

Peru is a presidential republic with a parliamentary government. The country divides into 25 ***departamentos*** (departments), also known as ***regiones*** (regions), which subdivide into ***provincias*** (provinces) and ***distritos*** (districts). Located on the central coast within the greater Lima *departamento*, Callao is a constitutional *provincia* and Peru's main port (see *Technology and Material*). Adopted in 1993 and most recently amended in 2021, Peru's Constitution separates power among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, while outlining the basic rights and freedoms of the Peruvian people.

Executive Branch

Executive power is vested in the President, who is chief-of-state and head-of-government. The

President is elected by popular vote to serve a 5-year term. Although allowed reelection, the terms cannot be consecutive. Peru also has two Vice Presidents, elected by popular vote, whose only formal role is to succeed the President in case of death, incapacity, resignation, or other reasons to vacate office.

The President appoints the Council of Ministers (Cabinet) and its President, also referred to as the Prime Minister (PM), who must be approved by Congress. The PM is the most senior Cabinet member, who functions as Chief of Staff and does not exercise executive power. The President is responsible for approving and can propose new legislation. Both the current President Dina Ercilia Boluarte and current PM Alberto Otarola Penaranda assumed office in 2022.

Legislative Branch

Legislative power is vested in the single-chamber ***Congreso de la República del Perú*** (Congress of the Republic of Peru), consisting of 130 seats. Legislators are directly elected in multi-seat constituencies through proportional representation to serve 5-year terms. Congress votes on legislation, which the President must approve. If the President rejects a bill, Congress can override the veto with a simple majority vote. If the President does not respond to the new legislation within 15 working days, the bill becomes a law.

Judicial Branch

The judiciary includes the Supreme Court, Court of Constitutional Guarantees, Superior Courts, Civil Courts, Criminal Courts, Mixed Courts, and Courts of Peace. As the highest court of appeal, the Supreme Court consists of 16 judges and three sectors – civil, which reviews civil and commercial rights cases; criminal; and constitutional and social, which hears cases about constitutional and labor law. The National Council of the Magistracy (a seven-member independent body) appoints Supreme Court justices, whom the President nominates and Congress confirms. Judges can serve until mandatory retirement at age 70.

Political Climate

Following the end of authoritarian Alberto Fujimori's Presidency in 2000 (see *History and Myth*), the Peruvian political system has been volatile. The constantly shifting existence and alignment of political parties have prevented any single or group of parties from dominating politics. Between 2016-22, Peru had five presidents from five different political parties (see "Civil Unrest" below). Peruvians vote on changing lists of parties at each election, contributing to the fragmented electoral system.

The country has universal and compulsory voting for all citizens ages 18-70. However, Peru's civil registry does not grant voting registration to people with disabilities who had previous legal guardianships, limiting their full legal capacity. If no candidate receives a majority in the initial round of voting, a run-off is held. The two political parties with the most votes in the first round participate in a second decisive vote.

In the 2021 presidential election, then-President Castillo's left-wing ***Peru Libre*** (Free Peru) and former-Congresswoman and daughter of Alberto Fujimori, Keiko Fujimori's right-wing ***Fuerza Popular*** (Popular Force) parties were dominant. *Peru Libre* and *Fuerza Popular* are relatively new parties, founded only in 2008 and 2010, respectively.

As of 2021, other political parties that hold seats in Congress are Democratic Peru and Together for Peru, aligned to *Peru Libre*, and Popular Action, Alliance for Progress, Go on Country, Popular Renewal, and others, aligned to *Fuerza Popular*. Nevertheless, party alliances and representation in Congress frequently shift, as Peruvian politics tends to focus more on candidates and issues than parties or static platforms.

Corruption is also widespread. In a 2023 corruption perceptions index, Peru ranked 89 of 156 countries, similar to neighboring Ecuador (90), but more corrupt than Colombia (76) and Brazil (80). In 2021, courts convicted 48 government officials in 90 corruption-related cases. Prosecutors have accused Keiko Fujimori of corruption tied to Brazil's Odebrecht scandal (see

History and Myth), money laundering, and other crimes. She was in pre-trial detention until her release due to COVID-19 complications (see *Sustenance and Health*). Castillo's 2021 presidential campaign focused on decades of investigations into political figures involved in corrupt acts, such as illegal campaign financing, bribes, and electoral fraud.

Peruvians frequently protest their government, with some of the most recent ones against then-President Castillo in 2021, in which demonstrators demanded better labor conditions (see *Time and Space*). Other protests denounced his former PM, Guido Bellido, for prejudicial statements towards women and homosexual people, and for being a member of the communist Shining Path (see *History and Myth*) guerrilla group. Many protestors were supporters of Keiko Fujimori, who claimed voter fraud in the presidential election (see *History and Myth*), though Fujimori failed to provide sufficient evidence of such corruption.

Starting in 2021, opposition legislators presented multiple unsuccessful motions to impeach Castillo on grounds of corruption, sparking large protests. In December 2022, after Castillo announced plans to dissolve Congress in an attempted self-coup, lawmakers succeeded in impeaching him.

Defense

The Peruvian Armed Forces is a unified military force with a joint strength of about 81,000 active-duty troops and 188,000 reserve personnel. It also includes the National Police, which is responsible for citizen security. Military operations focus on preserving territorial integrity and security, with significant focus on counternarcotics and counterinsurgency operations. The Armed Forces often contributes to United Nations (UN) missions overseas, notably in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, South Sudan, and Sudan. Voluntary conscription for men and women is for a 12-month term.

Army: Comprising about 47,500 active-duty troops, Peru's Army is organized into 2 special forces brigades, 19 maneuver brigades (including armored, mechanized, and light), 3 combat support, 1 combat service support, and an aviation brigade, and an air defense group.

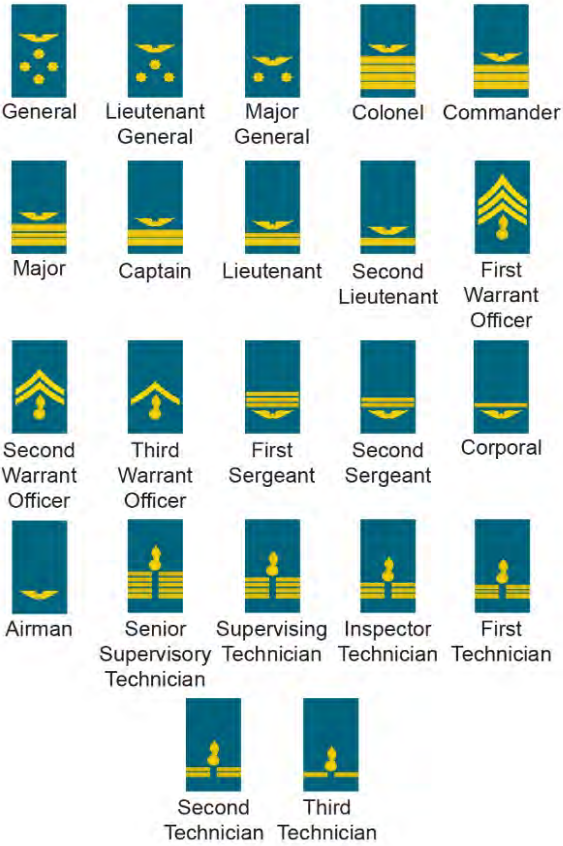
Navy: Peru's Navy comprises around 24,000 active-duty Navy and 1,000 Coast Guard personnel and is organized into 3 commands (Pacific, Lake Titicaca, and Amazon River). Consisting of about 4,000 active-duty personnel, the Navy Marines include 4 special forces groups and 9 maneuver battalions and groups (including light, amphibious, and jungle).

Air Force: Consisting of about 9,500 active-duty troops, the Air Force includes a fighter; 5 fighter/ground attack; an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; 3 transport; 5 training; an attack helicopter; and 3 transport helicopter squadrons; and 6 air defense battalions.

Paramilitary: The Peruvian Paramilitary and Gendarmerie consist of about 77,000 National Police forces, including general, security, and technical police divisions.

***Rondas Campesinas* (Peasant Rounds):** The *Rondas Campesinas* is a peasant self-defense force comprising about 7,000 members with small arms, who mainly deploy to natural disaster or emergency zones. The group is legally recognized as an autonomous organization to assist in conflict resolution and support the military in rural and indigenous communities. However, some observers criticize members for acting as an informal vigilante justice group with a reputation for bribes and humiliating or inflicting harm on apprehended criminals.

Peruvian Air Force Rank Insignia



Security Issues

Civil Unrest: For decades, Peru has experienced sporadic demonstrations, as protestors demand an end to political corruption, reduction in wealth inequality, and justice for human rights violations.

Between 1996-2000, during Fujimori's Presidency, the government forcibly sterilized up to 350,000 people, most of whom were indigenous women from poor, rural areas. Neither the criminal justice system nor the government addressed the abuse, and ongoing protests have continued for over a decade. The creation of an online database of women's testimonies and pressure from international human rights groups resulted in the government holding public hearings on the matter for the first time in 2021.

Peruvians hold frequent pro-democracy and anti-corruption protests. In 2020, they took to the streets in response to chaotic shifts in government and the impeachment of former President Martín Vizcarra (see *History and Myth*). According to the UN, the police used unnecessary force to disperse crowds with tear gas directed at people's heads and 12-gauge shotgun fire. Human rights organizations have reported arbitrary arrests and excessive force, resulting in the deaths of some protestors.

Since 2021, transport and agricultural workers in many regions have held ongoing protests to demand increased wages (see *Time and Space*) and condemn police violence. In 2022, then-President Castillo issued a state of emergency and curfew to curtail the protests. The act sparked more demonstrations that also denounced rising food and fuel prices, and many protests have turned into even broader anti-government demonstrations.

Narcotics Trafficking: Peru is the world's second largest producer of cocaine (a drug refined from coca leaves, which are also used for medicinal and other purposes – see *Sustenance*

and Health). Most coca is grown in the rural Andean region known as the ***Valle de los Ríos Apurímac, Ene y Mantaro*** (Valley of the Apurímac, Ene, and Mantaro Rivers, or VRAEM). Although many rural, poor Peruvians are forced into cocaine production, the criminal groups that organize much of the production and trafficking are often violent and pose security threats. A splinter group of the Shining Path known as the ***Militarizado Partido Comunista del Perú*** (Militarized Communist Party of Peru, or MPCP) controls most production by taxing producers and providing security for cocaine transport.

While Peru has prioritized the eradication of cocaine production for over 40 years, it has largely failed due to the dependence on coca cultivation in rural areas and lack of governmental control in the VRAEM. Despite a military presence, the government has failed to remove the MPCP from the isolated region and stop cocaine production. As a result, violence related to the drug trade persists. In 2021, the MPCP committed a massacre, killing 16 civilians. In mid-2022, the government proposed buying the entire illegal coca supply and demilitarizing the VRAEM. Since most coca leaves are grown illegally to be refined into cocaine rather than for chewing, teas, liquors, or other legal uses, the plan intends to curtail illegal production. However, experts doubt Peru has the capacity to buy the excess leaves, use them in local industries, or that sufficient demand exists for the legal products.

Foreign Relations

Peru historically maintains close economic and political ties with many countries in Latin America, the US, and Europe. Peru also has close trade ties with China, having signed a free-trade agreement in 2009, and recently becoming a partner in China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Peru is a member of the UN, Organization of American States, World Trade Organization, International Criminal Court, Interpol, World Health Organization, International Monetary Fund, Asian-

Pacific Economic Cooperation, and other international economic and peace organizations. Peru is also a member of the Lima Group, a coalition of countries in the Western Hemisphere seeking to address the human rights crisis in Venezuela that has caused millions of Venezuelans to flee their country.

Relations with Venezuela: In 2018, Peru and five other countries requested the International Criminal Court investigate and prosecute Venezuela's alleged crimes against humanity and human rights abuses under its President, Nicolás Maduro. In response, Peru and Venezuela curtailed diplomatic relations and instituted visa requirements. After then-President Castillo was elected in 2021, Peru and Venezuela reestablished diplomatic ties and reopened embassies. Peru's Ambassador to Venezuela announced the need to serve Peruvians in Venezuela and find a solution to the emigration problem that led almost 1.5 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees to flee to Peru.

Relations with Bolivia and Chile: Peru and Bolivia trace their contentious relations with Chile to the 19th century, when Chile acquired territories from those countries during the War of the Pacific (see *History and Myth*). Hoping to reclaim territory, Peru and Bolivia filed cases against Chile with the International Court of Justice. In 2014, Peru won a 7-year border case that granted it greater sea territory. In 2021, Peru and Bolivia signed new bilateral agreements to strengthen trade and tourism. Peru also has a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Chile and is part of the Andean FTA with Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and the US.

Relations with the US: The US and Peru first established relations in 1827, just 3 years after Peru gained independence (see *History and Myth*). Today, the US maintains close diplomatic ties and interest in Peru's continued fight against transnational criminal organizations, illegal human and narcotics

trafficking, corruption, and environmental crimes. The US and Peru also have established close security and economic ties.

The US provides significant aid to Peru (see *Economics and Resources*), primarily for economic and social development. Specific programs seek to find alternatives to coca production, reduce corruption, and promote sustainable environmental and natural resource management. The US has provided over $100 million to support humanitarian assistance efforts in Peru in the wake of the Venezuelan migrant crisis. In 2021, the US International Narcotics and Law Enforcement's budget in Peru was $37 million to support counternarcotics, justice sector, anti-money laundering, asset forfeiture, police professionalization, and drug demand reduction programs. In 2020, the US donated millions of vaccines and provided over $20 million to address the impacts of COVID-19.

In 2009, the US and Peru implemented an FTA. Between 2009-20, bilateral food and agricultural trade increased from $1.5-$4 billion. Additionally, US tourism to Peru increased by 40% between 2016-21.

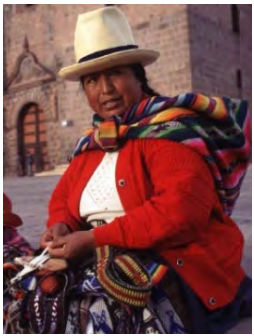
Ethnic Groups

According to Peru's 2017 census, about 60% of Peruvians are ***mestizo*** (mixed indigenous and white); 26% Quechua, Aymara, or other indigenous groups; 5.9% white; 3.6% people of African descent; 1.2% other (including people of Chinese or Japanese descent); and 3.3% unspecified.

Mestizos mainly live along the coast and have a mixed culture influenced by indigenous and European customs. Indigenous Peruvians mostly live in rural areas, particularly in the Andes and Amazon. The term ***andinos*** refers to indigenous people living in the Andes, ***charapas*** to inhabitants of the Amazon, and ***costeños*** are those who live on the coastal plains. Over 50 distinct indigenous Amazonian groups maintain traditional lifestyles. Due to internal migration, today, many indigenous Peruvians live in urban areas or city outskirts in ***pueblos***

jóvenes (“young towns,” or shanty towns, see p. 1 of *Family and Kinship*).

Peru is home to the two largest indigenous populations on the American continents. The largest group is the Quechua, who primarily reside in the Andean highlands of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. The second is the Aymara, who mainly live on the plateau of the central Andes in Peru and Bolivia, with smaller populations in Argentina and Chile.



Many white Peruvians of Spanish and other European descent immigrated during the colonial era and the First and Second World Wars (see *History and Myth*). Today, they concentrate in large cities along the coast, such as Lima and Trujillo.

The Spanish first brought enslaved Africans to Peru during the colonial era (see *History and Myth*), and they typically remained enslaved until Ramón Castilla abolished slavery in 1854 (see *History and Myth*). Today, Afro-Peruvians primarily live in Lima and central coastal valleys.

Tusán (Chinese Peruvians) and ***nikkei*** (Japanese Peruvians) first immigrated to Peru in the 19th century (see *History and Myth*) as indentured workers on plantations, railroads, and in mines. Subsequent waves of East Asian immigrants moved to Peru throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Notably, Alberto and Keiko Fujimori are Peruvians of Japanese descent.

Social Relations

Peruvian society divides along rural-urban, rich-poor, and ethnic group lines. Peru’s society inherited hierarchal and racist values from colonial times, when Spanish conquerors dominated indigenous people and controlled the country’s politics, religion, and economy. Some remnants of this colonial past are evident today. For example, society places greater value on Spanish than indigenous languages like Quechua or Aymara (see *Language and Communication*), and some young indigenous

Peruvians prefer to learn Spanish instead of their family's native language. However, while some Peruvians attempt to distance themselves from their indigenous heritage and traditions, many others are proud of their ancestry and culture.

Peruvian society divides into a small upper- and large middle- and lower-classes. Peruvians of European descent and *mestizos* tend to comprise the upper class, live in urban areas, and control most wealth. This small group of Peruvians typically holds power in government and many sectors of the economy. *Mestizos* – who hold many managerial, professional, and some blue-collar jobs – dominate the newly emergent middle class. Some middle-class Peruvians are also small landowners.

Rural poverty disproportionately affects indigenous populations. Peru's poorest areas are in the Andes, where many indigenous Peruvians live. This group typically lives below the poverty line in isolated, rural areas with inadequate access to resources like healthcare (see *Sustenance and Health*) and infrastructure (see *Technology and Material*).

For example, in 2009, some 78% of children who spoke Quechua or Aymara lived in poverty, compared to 40% of children whose first language was Spanish. Although the Constitution grants equal rights to all Peruvians and recognizes indigenous languages, indigenous groups often face discrimination resulting in disadvantages in work, education, and access to healthcare. Further, overreliance on commodities (see *Economics and Resources*) and lax environmental protections have led to oil spills, exploitative oil palm cultivation, deforestation, and pollution on indigenous land that destroy traditional ways of life.

Between 2016-23, the number of Venezuelans in Peru rose from 7,000-1.6 million, the majority of whom live in and around Lima. With Venezuelans now comprising about 5% of the population, anti-immigrant sentiment has grown among some Peruvians, fueling a rift between some communities.

3. RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Overview

Peruvians are 66% Catholic, 22% Protestant, 7% nonreligious, and 5% other, which includes adherents of additional Christian denominations, Jews, Muslims, Baha'is, and Buddhists. While Peru's Constitution protects freedom of religion and establishes a separation of church and state, the Catholic Church remains highly influential in Peruvian society and government.

Early Religion

Around 3500 BC (see *History and Myth*), early inhabitants of the region lived in settlements along the Pacific coast of present-day Peru and built ceremonial buildings to worship natural spirits. They also held ceremonies to bury their dead in animal skins adorned with beads and pendants.

From about 900-200 BC, the Chavín people built elaborate temples and burial complexes with sculptures and engravings depicting various deities that combine human and animal features. While little is known about these deities, there are two notable examples. The first is the "Smiling God," who had hair made of snakes and a pair of large fangs. The other was the "Staff God," who had claws, a feline face with crossed fangs, and a staff in each hand. The Chavín also believed in animal spirits and used animal teeth and heads during religious ceremonies. In addition, evidence suggests the Chavín made ritualistic sacrifices, which may have included humans, at their temples.

Subsequent groups such as the Nazca, Moche, Chimú, and Chincha peoples (see *History and Myth*) held similar religious beliefs and constructed larger temple complexes with detailed artistic depictions of deities and spirits. These groups are also renowned for pottery, which often depicted religious imagery. The Nazca (200 BC-600 AD), who lived along Peru's southern coast near Ica, created the famous Nazca Lines, which are

enormous drawings of animals and shapes etched into the earth on a high desert plain. The largest of the lines is nearly 360 ft long, and the entire complex covers an area of nearly 190 sq mi. Due to the extremely dry climate, these lines remain preserved despite being only a few inches deep. Although shrouded in mystery for years, today, archeologists generally agree that the Nazca drew them as part of religious worship. The religious beliefs and practices of these groups would later shape religion in the Inca Empire.

Incan Religion

According to Incan legend, around 1200 AD, the Inca state emerged in the Andes around Cuzco and expanded rapidly across western South America by conquering and uniting various tribes in the 15th century (see *History and Myth*). The Incas practiced a complex religion with numerous deities, spirits, animistic beliefs, and other religious practices drawn from earlier cultures. Among these deities was ***Viracocha***, the creator god, who sculpted humans from stone and taught them various skills and technologies. The most notable Incan deity was ***Inti***, the sun god, who enabled agriculture to thrive. The Incas believed they descended from *Inti* and usually depicted him as a human face on a sunlike disk. Other major Incan deities are ***Illapu***, the rain god, ***Mama Quilla***, the moon goddess and wife of *Inti,* and ***Pachamama***, the embodiment of mother earth.

The Incas also attributed supernatural beliefs to features of the natural world and constructed elaborate temples and shrines for religious worship throughout their empire. They typically built temples to celebrate specific deities, like a sun temple in Cuzco to worship *Inti*. Most Incan temples were not designed to shelter worshippers, as most Incan ceremonies occurred outdoors. Instead, they served as sanctuaries for sacred objects used during worship. In addition to temples, manmade structures and natural features like mountains or rivers served as ***huacas*** (holy sites or shrines) scattered across the empire.

Temples were also the site of religious sacrifices. Each day, the Incas practiced minor sacrifices, such as throwing corn, ***chicha de jora*** (corn beer), and other foodstuffs into a fire for the sun god. Larger sacrifices of llamas, guinea pigs, and ceremonial ponchos took place on holidays or at the start of each lunar month. For major events or during a crisis, Incas practiced human sacrifice, typically by burning children. Most sacrificial victims came from conquered regions, serving as a form of taxation, and were selected based on having no physical blemishes that might offend the gods.

At each temple complex, an ***umu*** (Incan priest) conducted all religious ceremonies. One of the priest's most significant functions was divination, the practice of seeking knowledge of the unknown by supernatural means, which preceded all major undertakings. The Incas used divination to determine the will of the gods, sacrifices to offer them, battle outcomes, and to solve crimes and diagnose illness. Priests often communicated with idol figures at *huacas*, where they received divine messages.

Fire also played a key role in divination, as the *umu* observed the flames, while chewing coca leaves (see *Sustenance and Health*). Other methods of divination included watching the movements of spiders, observing patterns of coca leaves in water, and drinking ayahuasca, a psychedelic brew made from Amazonian plants that causes hallucinations. Confession was also a major component of Incan religion. The Incas believed that individuals' failure to observe religious rules brought misfortune to the community, and only by confessing their misdeeds to an *umu* could they avoid further misfortune.

Arrival of Christianity

When the Spanish conquered Peru in the early 16th century (see *History and Myth*), they sought to spread Roman Catholicism to indigenous groups. The Spanish believed in a holy duty to convert indigenous Peruvians, which gave them an ideological

justification for their conquests. A priest therefore joined Francisco Pizarro on his conquest of the Incan Empire, and subsequent expeditions included other missionaries, who were known to convert indigenous Peruvians forcefully.

The Spanish prohibited Incan religious practices, destroyed their temples and idols, and violently coerced them to adopt Christianity. Under the ***encomienda*** forced labor system (see *History and Myth*), the Spanish converted enslaved indigenous people to Christianity, which quickly became Peru's dominant religion. Some aspects of Incan religion, like the belief in natural spirits and certain burial rites, persisted or merged with Christian practices, producing what is known as Andean Catholicism, a syncretic (mixed) religion still practiced in some rural areas.

Roman Catholicism expanded alongside Spain's presence in its Peruvian colony. Lima became the seat of an archbishop in 1546, and religious orders founded monasteries and convents across the country. The Spanish built hundreds of churches, many on former Incan religious sites. Some of the first books printed in Peru were guides for Spanish priests to evangelize Quechua- and Aymara-speaking groups (see *Language and Communication*), which included native-language liturgies. Roman Catholicism remained Peru's official state religion for the entire colonial period (see *History and Myth*).

When Peru secured independence from Spain in 1824 (see *History and Myth*), it recognized a shared Catholic religion as a unifying factor in the new multicultural nation. As most Spanish Catholic leaders had fled during the wars of independence, the Peruvian government claimed responsibility for religious leadership. It viewed the clergy as public servants and appointed new religious leaders to replace the Spanish. While Catholicism would remain Peru's official state religion until the government

formalized separation of church and state in 1980, in the mid-1800s, thousands of Chinese and Japanese laborers immigrated to Peru, bringing with them new religious faiths, particularly Buddhism.

Peru's 1860 Constitution made Roman Catholicism the country's only legal religion. However, political instability resulted in the state seizure of assets that impoverished the Church, while the number of clergy members declined and their relationship with the government deteriorated. By 1900, Protestants had begun preaching in Peru despite the 1860 law, which the government repealed in 1920. Meanwhile, reformers pushed for a secular government, which the weakened Church struggled to prevent. Eventually, the Catholic Church's role in politics became largely symbolic, and Peru operated as a secular state.

Outside of politics, Peru's Catholic Church entered a period of revival in the early 20th century due to an influx of foreign missionaries, who helped establish churches, schools, and universities (see *Learning and Knowledge*). After World War II (see *History and Myth*), another wave of foreign missionaries helped restore Catholicism's prominence in Peru.

During military rule from 1968-80 (see *History and Myth*), the Church supported most government initiatives. After democracy returned to Peru in 1980, the Church became a target of violent extremism by the anti-government communist group known as the Shining Path (see *History and Myth*), whose members assassinated Church leaders until its leader was captured in 1992. By the 21st century, the Catholic Church had become less politically active and prioritized aiding poor Peruvians, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Religion Today

While Peru's Constitution recognizes the Catholic Church's place in the country's history and culture, it also grants Peruvians religious freedom, and society is largely tolerant of other religions. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church and its

members retain significant privileges. As part of a 1980 agreement with the Holy See (the governing body of the Roman Catholic Church at the Vatican in Rome), the Catholic Church retains numerous tax benefits, educational privileges, and other advantages not offered to other religious groups. All Peruvian public schools are required to teach Catholic beliefs in religion classes (see *Learning and Knowledge*), for which the local Catholic bishop approves the curriculum. In addition, only Catholic chaplains serve as religious leaders in the Peruvian Armed Forces (see *Political and Social Relations*).

Catholic beliefs also shape Peruvian laws, such as prohibiting abortion except in cases of emergency, not recognizing same-sex marriage (see *Sex and Gender*), and strict divorce laws (see *Family and Kinship*). In addition, some non-Catholics report discrimination, such as not receiving time off from work for religious observances.

Catholicism: Although Peru is home to about 24 million Roman Catholics, membership has declined. Fewer Peruvians attend mass or actively practice Catholicism than in the past. As of 2014, only about 30% of Catholics reported regular mass attendance, and some 46% prayed daily. Nevertheless, Peru has a significant visual representation of the religion, ranging from cathedrals to images. Symbols like devotions to the Virgin Mary, such as the Peruvian Virgin of Chapi, are prominent throughout the country.

Peru's Catholics have many unique celebrations and traditions, such as the festival of ***El Señor de los Milagros*** (The Lord of Miracles), when thousands of Peruvians join a procession to honor a painting of Jesus believed to have miraculous qualities. According to stories, an enslaved Afro-Peruvian painted Jesus on a wall in central Lima that attracted many devotees, which in 1655, was undamaged during an earthquake that destroyed all the surrounding area. After surviving subsequent earthquakes, the painting became famous, and today, the festival is one of

Latin America's largest religious celebrations. Like elsewhere in Latin America, many Peruvian Catholics celebrate ***semana santa*** (holy week) before Easter with festivals and processions.

Other Christian Churches: Many other Christian groups are active in Peru and have experienced significant membership growth in recent years. Specifically, Evangelical and Pentecostal groups have undergone an immense surge in followers in Peru and across Latin America. Though some of these groups have been present in Peru since the early 20th century, many of the more recent converts are former Catholics from poor urban areas. In 2017, Peru's government recognized October 31st as "Day of Evangelical Churches," also known as Reformation Day.

Evangelical and Pentecostal groups are also increasingly involved in politics (see *Political and Social Relations*). In 2020, the Agricultural People's Front of Peru, the political party of the Israelites of the New Universal Pact Church (which blends Christian and Andean religious beliefs), gained seats in Congress. Prominent Pentecostal churches also backed Keiko Fujimori's 2016 campaign for President and continue to back candidates in congressional and municipal elections.

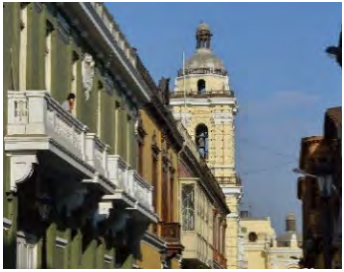
In addition to Evangelicals and Pentecostals, other Christian groups in Peru include Jehovah's Witnesses, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Orthodox Christians. These groups live throughout Peru, yet often concentrate in major cities like Lima, Arequipa, and Trujillo.

Other Religions: Various non-Christian religious minorities including Muslims, Jews, Baha'is, and Buddhists (many of whom descend from Chinese and Japanese immigrants) live in Peru (see *Political and Social Relations*). Buddhist meditation practices have grown popular as a way of relieving stress and reconnecting with oneself. Many of Peru's religious minorities live in major cities. In rural areas, some indigenous Peruvians still practice traditional Incan or other native religions.

4. FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Overview

The family is the center of Peruvian life, with close-knit members relying on each other for emotional, financial, and social support. Marrying and starting a family remain a priority for most young adults.



Residence

In the early 20th century, urbanization increased due to industrialization, so Peruvians began migrating to cities in search of better economic opportunities. As of 2023, about 79% of the population lives in urban areas. Although electricity is widely available, some low-income homes have no drinking water access. During droughts, municipalities often ration water. Few homes and offices have central heating and AC systems. In the Andes region, many dwellings rely on wood stoves or gas heaters for warmth during the winter.

Urban: Middle- and upper-class urban families tend to reside in high-rise apartments, private homes, or large colonial houses constructed from concrete, wood, steel, or glass. Many middle- and upper-class apartment buildings have amenities like gyms, swimming pools, rooftop gardens, and security guards. By contrast, many lower-class families live in makeshift housing. Migration from the Andean region to Lima has resulted in the development of ***pueblos jóvenes*** ("young towns"), where some residents build homes from reed matting or other makeshift materials, until they can afford bricks and mortar. Many residents in *pueblos jóvenes* lack basic services, especially running water.

Rural: Most families in rural areas live in traditional homes made of materials like stone, wood or reeds, and ***adobe*** (clay) brick to withstand extreme weather (see *Political and Social Relations*). Some upper-class families occupy older, European-style homes

with courtyards. Many houses in the Andes are made of *adobe* to keep their interiors warm in the freezing winter temperatures. Around Lake Titicaca in southern Peru, some homes are made of totora plant reeds that allow some indigenous Peruvians to build floating island communities. Modern building materials, like concrete, increasingly are used to construct rural homes.

Family Structure

In Peruvian families, the father is traditionally the primary source for income and head-of-household, while the mother is responsible for domestic tasks and childcare. Many women also work outside the home (see *Sex and Gender*). It is common for middle- and upper-class households to employ domestic helpers and nannies, who often come from rural, lower-income communities. Some households include extended relatives, with close friends sometimes living nearby.

Trusted family friends often become part of the kin network as ***padrinos*** (godparents). In many rural areas and indigenous villages, ***ayllu*** (extended kin groups) play a role in defining social obligations, roles, and identity, while connecting families in village social structures. Peruvians highly respect their elders, with children often caring for their aging parents. Many children live at home until they marry or graduate from university. While couples traditionally do not live together until married, a lack of financial resources and high wedding costs compel some to live with their parents or cohabitate while saving for a wedding.

Polygyny: This term refers to the practice of a man having multiple wives simultaneously. Though illegal in Peru, polygyny is practiced among the Ashaninka, a minority indigenous group in the Amazon with about 45,000 members in Peru and Brazil.

Children

While Peruvian families historically had many children, they have far fewer today (see *Sex and Gender*). Many parents are highly involved in their children's lives, even if they employ

nannies or domestic help. Parents tend to be highly protective of their children, especially girls, and many children respect and obey their parents' decisions.

Birth: After a birth, family members and friends typically present flowers and gifts to the new mother. Traditionally, Peruvians consider superstitions that attract attention to a newborn bad luck. Some Peruvians protect their children, particularly infants, against the ***mal de ojo*** (evil eye) by wearing red clothing.

Rites of Passage

Many Peruvians observe Roman Catholic rites of passage, such as baptizing their children within a few months of birth, first communion around age 9, and confirmation age 12. Ceremonies are usually followed by a dinner celebration with extended family. Some Peruvian 15-year-old girls have a ***fiesta de Quince*** (party of 15), also called ***Quinceañera***, to celebrate their transition into adulthood. Festivities typically include a father-daughter entrance to a large party with friends and family.

Dating and Courtship: Peruvians typically begin dating in their mid-to-late teens. Couples often meet at school, community events, or parties, and typically marry someone from a similar socioeconomic and ethnic background (see *Political and Social Relations*). Traditionally, most Peruvians married and started a family in their early-to-mid-20s. Today, Peruvians increasingly engage in casual dating, and couples often spend more time together before marriage.

Weddings: Most Peruvian weddings comprise a civil ceremony performed at a municipal office and a religious one at a church. While the religious ceremony is not legally required and must take place after the civil wedding, many couples believe their marriage is incomplete without a church event. Some urban Peruvians opt for only a civil marriage, which is often cheaper than the traditional church wedding. Attendance at the civil ceremony is usually restricted to a few family members and

friends, while the religious ceremony is generally a larger and often extravagant affair.

The wedding reception typically includes plentiful food, alcohol, music, and dancing. The party often continues into the early morning with ***la hora loca*** ("the crazy hour," or after party). Traditionally, a ***despacho*** (ceremony originating in the Andes) features a blanket or cloth with gifted symbolic items like coca leaves and flowers that is later burned or buried by the couple to give blessings to ***Pachamama*** (mother earth, see *Religion and Spirituality*). Some Peruvians believe the *despacho* provides well wishes to the newlyweds.

Divorce

Legalized only in 2003, divorce is highly stigmatized in Peru, where divorce rates remain low at just 0.2 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2024, lower than the US (2.4) and neighboring Colombia and Chile (0.7). As of late-2024, Peru has the world's third lowest divorce rate.

Death

After death, the deceased is traditionally kept at home with a family member so their loved one is not left alone. Peruvians typically place the deceased in an open casket at home or in church for a few days to hold a ***velatorio*** (wake). During this time, family and friends visit to pay respects and bring food and flowers to the family home. Often on the third day, Peruvians hold a funeral mass at a church, after which the family transports the casket to a cemetery for burial. After a short graveside service, the family hosts a meal at their home. Many Peruvians wear black attire to demonstrate their grief and mourning.

Family and friends typically visit and bring flowers to the grave on Sundays. Many Peruvians hold mass to honor their loved one 1 month, 6 months, and 1 year after their death. Peruvians collectively remember the dead on ***Día de los Muertos*** (Day of the Dead), when the souls of the deceased visit their relatives in cemeteries for celebrations with food, drinks, and music.

5. SEX AND GENDER

Overview

Traditionally, Peru has a male-dominated society, whereby ***machismo*** (strong masculine pride) is counterbalanced by ***marianismo*** (female subservience). The Peruvian social system is patriarchal, meaning men hold most power and authority. Women's equality has progressed rapidly in recent decades, and Peru ranked 7th out of 22 Latin American countries in a 2023 study of gender equality.

Gender Roles and Work

Domestic Work: Historically, Peruvian society maintained a distinct division between genders, with women responsible for most household chores and childcare, even if they work outside the home.

Labor Force: As of 2024, about 65% of women are employed, higher than the Latin America and Caribbean average (51%), the US (57%), and Bolivia (72%). Overall, men tend to dominate skilled and professional positions. Women hold about 31% of managerial positions and often work in lower paying jobs such as nursing and teaching. About 60% of women work in the informal sector, often as housekeepers or nannies, where they receive even lower wages and no workforce protections (see *Time and Space*). Although Peruvian law prohibits wage discrimination based on sex, as of 2024, women earned just 5% of what men make for similar work.

Gender and the Law

Women are guaranteed 14 weeks of maternity leave. Although the law protects women from pregnancy-based employment discrimination, employers often ask women about their plans to have children during interviews, which adversely affects their job opportunities. Despite legal protections covering equal pay, workplace harassment, and arbitrary dismissal of pregnant women, authorities often fail to enforce laws, and employers neglect workplace protections. Although sexual harassment is a

crime with a penalty of up to 8 years, enforcement is minimal. The first conviction in a sexual harassment case was in 2019.

Gender and Politics

Peruvian women received the right to vote in 1956. Peru's national electoral legislation has incorporated evolving gender quotas for political party lists since 1997. Political parties are legally obligated to include at least 40% of women on their party lists, which is set to increase to 45% in the 2026 elections. In 2021, women represented about 41% of seats in Congress, lower than neighboring Bolivia (46%), but higher than Chile (31%) and the US (30%) (see *History and Myth* and *Political and Social Relations*). Peru's first female President, Dina Boluarte, assumed office in December 2022.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

GBV is widespread and has become more prevalent due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions (see *Sustenance and Health*). Six out of 10 women ages 14-49 suffered some form of physical, psychological, or sexual violence in 2023. Nearly 29,000 GBV cases were reported, between January-August of the same year, 112 femicides (the murder of a woman based on her gender) and 800 sexual abuse cases. The law criminalizes rape and femicide with minimum sentences of 14 years and 20 years, respectively. However, prosecution of cases is often ineffective.

The law also criminalizes domestic violence and requires police investigation within 5 days of complaint and protection of female victims. Judges and prosecutors are authorized to prevent convicted spouses from returning to their family homes. Various services assist GBV survivors, such as hotlines and some 446 emergency centers and shelters, although shelters often lack psychological services. In 2019, the Latin American feminist movement ***Ni Una Menos*** (Not One Less) raised awareness and demanded justice for women in a series of protests and marches in Lima.

Sex and Procreation

Between 1960-2024, Peru's fertility rate dropped from 7 births per woman to 2.2, between Bolivia (2.7) and Colombia (1.9) and the US (1.8). Although the decrease is partly due to the Fujimori regime's population control policies that sterilized thousands of women (see *Political and Social Relations*), improved access to reproductive health services has provided more family planning options. Women in cities typically have fewer children than those in rural areas, where access to healthcare and birth control is less readily available. Many rural women do not speak Spanish (see *Language and Communication*) and avoid clinics where they cannot communicate with the staff, contributing to the high maternal mortality rate of 69 per 1,000 births in 2020, compared to 21 in the US. As of 2023, almost 8% of girls ages 15-19 had been pregnant at least once.

Although the law provides reproductive rights to individuals and couples to decide the number, spacing, and timing of children, the law prohibits abortion except to save the mother's life or prevent her serious illness. Selective abortion access is limited, and women who abort a fetus and practitioners who assist them can serve up to 2 and 4 years in prison, respectively.

Homosexuality in Peru

Same-sex couples are not allowed to marry or enter civil unions. Although some courts recognize the same-sex marriages of Peruvians married abroad, the Constitutional Court denied recognition of one such couple in 2020. Peru's Constitution does not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Officials often fail to protect homosexual individuals, many of whom conceal their sexuality to avoid discrimination and persecution.

At this time, the US State Department does not have a Status of Forces Agreement in place for Peru. Service members will be subject to local laws with regards to this topic.

6. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Overview

Spanish is the official and primary language of government, business, education, and entertainment. Quechua and Aymara are indigenous languages that have official status in the primarily Andean and southern regions where they are widely spoken.

Spanish

Spanish is the first language of over 28 million Peruvians (88% of the population) and understood by most residents. Spanish conquerors first brought their language to the region in the 16th century (see *History and Myth*), and it became a *lingua franca* between the Spanish and diverse indigenous communities. Spanish uses the same alphabet as English with three additional consonants – ch, ll (pronounced like "y" as in yam or "j" as in jam), and ñ (pronounced like the "ny" in the word canyon). The similar alphabet, consistent spelling patterns, and Latin base make Spanish somewhat easy for English speakers to learn.

Peruvian Spanish has some features that distinguish it from other Spanish dialects, such as different colloquialisms and the more frequent use of third-person singular ***Usted*** ("you") over the second-person ***tú*** or ***vos***, which is common in other South American dialects. Peru is home to several regional Spanish dialects broadly classified as Coastal (spoken by inhabitants of Lima and other coastal cities), Andean (most common in Peru's mountainous interior), and Amazonian (a hybrid of Coastal and Andean Spanish and indigenous Amazonian languages). Coastal Spanish is considered the typical Peruvian Spanish dialect due to its status as the language of the upper classes in Lima.

Quechua

Also known as ***Runasimi*** ("people's language"), Quechua is an indigenous language spoken by over 7 million Peruvians, mostly in rural areas and around Cuzco.

Though little is known about its origins, the language has likely been spoken by indigenous Andean peoples for over 1,000 years. Quechua was the language of the Incas, who spread it across their vast empire centered in Peru that covered parts of Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, and Colombia (see *History and Myth*). The Incas used Quechua as a unifying language, while assimilating various peoples into their empire.


Vocabulario de
la lengua general de los In-
dios del Peru, llamada
Quichua.

Today, Peruvians across the Andean region speak over 40 dialects of Quechua, which is the most widely spoken language in the Americas that was present before European colonization. In Peru, Quechua generally divides into northern, central, and southern dialects, with southern the most common).

Aymara

It is an indigenous language used by over 650,000 Peruvians, mostly in southern Peru around Lake Titicaca. Aymara is the language of the Aymara people, who the Incas conquered and brought into their empire. Of the many mutually intelligible Aymara dialects, southern and central are the most widely spoken in Peru today.

Other Languages

Peru is home to over 90 indigenous languages, most of which are spoken in rural areas in Peru's interior. Many Peruvians learn foreign languages, of which English is the most common. While Peruvian schools mandate English-language instruction (see *Learning and Knowledge*), proficiency is relatively low. English is most common in major cities, touristic areas, and among younger Peruvians. About 146,000 Peruvians speak Chinese, most of whom are descendants of Chinese laborers, who arrived in Peru in the 19th century (see *History and Myth*).

Communication Overview

Communicating competently in Peru requires not only knowledge of Spanish, but also the ability to interact effectively using language. This broad notion of competence includes paralanguage (rate of speech, volume, intonation), nonverbal

communication (personal space, touch, gestures), and interaction management (conversation initiation, turn-taking, and termination). When used properly, these forms of communication help to ensure that statements are interpreted as the speaker intends.

Communication Style

Peruvians tend to be expressive communicators and typically speak with animated gestures. Conversations are often energetic and loud with few moments of silence, though Peruvians may lower their voices when addressing someone of higher status or in formal settings. While multiple conversations may occur at once in group settings, Peruvians are typically attentive listeners and value in-person meetings.

Peruvians often imply their intended meaning rather than stating it directly and often avoid confrontation. Consequently, they tend to remain silent for periods of time to convey anger or frustration to a conversation partner. Peruvians typically view criticism as humiliating or offensive and usually address conflict in private. Accordingly, they are often diplomatic in what they say and avoid complaining in favor of maintaining a positive attitude. However, over time and as a relationship develops, communication often becomes more candid and direct.

Nonverbal communication is also common, and eye contact is especially important because it shows respect and attentiveness while listening and honesty while speaking (see *Time and Space*). Many Peruvians of both the same and opposite genders touch their conversation partner's arm, shoulder, or back while talking to convey affection. Peruvians also tend to stand close to each other (see *Time and Space*), as backing away from someone during a conversation is considered rude.

Greetings

Salutations are important to Peruvians, as they are welcoming and convey acknowledgment. The most common greeting is a

light handshake with eye contact, particularly when meeting someone for the first time or in a formal setting. Among family and close friends, most Peruvians greet with an ***abrazo*** (hug), which consists of a handshake and a hug among men and a hug and a kiss on the right cheek among women. Peruvian men often pat male friends and family on the back during a handshake. Occasionally, Peruvians greet with just a kiss on the right cheek, a greeting often reserved for more distant relatives.

Greetings are usually accompanied by the phrase ***buenos días*** ("good morning"), ***buenas tardes*** ("good afternoon"), or ***buenas noches*** ("good evening"). Peruvians also typically make polite initial inquiries when meeting someone, asking ***Cómo está Usted?*** ("How are you?"), for which the polite reply is ***estoy bien*** ("I am well").

Names

Most Peruvian names consist of one or two first (given) names and two last names. For example, in the name of former President José Pedro Castillo Terrones, José is his first name, Pedro is his second or middle name, Castillo is his father's surname, and Terrones is his mother's. Peruvians often name their children after close relatives or themselves. Although only the eldest daughter is typically named after her mother, sons may have the same first name as their father but different second names. Other given names are Catholic (see *Religion and Spirituality*), and some reflect Peruvians' multicultural heritage or family history. Women often keep their maiden name or add their husband's surname to the end of theirs, often denoted by adding ***de*** ("of") between surnames, like in María Álvarez Fernandez de García.

Forms of Address

In formal settings, Peruvians typically use professional titles (like Doctor) or titles of respect such as ***señor*** ("Mr."), ***señora*** ("Mrs."), and ***señorita*** (for young/unmarried women), sometimes with last name. To demonstrate special deference to elders or

those of a higher social class, Peruvians use the honorifics ***Don*** (for males) or ***Doña*** (for females). Friends of the same age often address one another by first names or a nickname. Peruvians also adjust their usage of "you" pronouns and verb conjugations depending on the level of formality required, utilizing the formal *Usted* in business transactions or when speaking to those of higher status, age, or to indicate respect. Among friends and in informal situations, Peruvians usually use *tú*.

Conversational Topics

After initial greetings, Peruvians typically converse about the health and wellbeing of each other and their families. Other common topics of conversation are Peruvian culture, cuisine, and natural landscapes. Soccer and other sports (see *Aesthetics and Recreation*) are usually welcome conversational topics. To avoid offense, foreign nationals should not talk about politics. Many Peruvians are patriotic and find criticism of Peru insulting. Some Peruvians consider jokes about mothers and grandmothers, who are highly respected in Peruvian culture, and illegal drugs and crime, as offensive. Peruvians also typically appreciate when one tries to speak Spanish, regardless of proficiency.

Gestures

Peruvians use many gestures in conversation. They beckon by holding the palm of the hand downward while waving all the fingers and often point to things with their lips. The "finger gun" gesture is offensive and often considered threatening. Throwing down the palm and bending at the wrist (the "never mind" gesture) is also offensive. Some Peruvians convey hunger by extending the arm, bunching the fingers together and bringing their hand towards their mouth.

Language Training Resources

Please view the Air Force Culture and Language Center website at www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFCLC/ and click on "Resources" for access to language training and other resources.

Useful Words and Phrases

English	Spanish
Hello	Hola
How are you?	¿Cómo está Usted?
I am well	Estoy bien
Excuse me	Disculpe / Perdón
Yes	Sí
No	No
Please	Por favor
Thank you	Gracias
You are welcome	De nada
I'm sorry	Lo siento
I don't understand	No entiendo
What is your name?	¿Cuál es su nombre? / ¿Cómo se llama?
My name is ___	Me llamo ____
Where are you from?	¿De dónde es Usted?
I am from the US	Yo soy de los Estados Unidos
Goodbye	Adiós / Chau
Good morning/day	Buenos días
Good afternoon	Buenas tardes
Good evening	Buenas noches
What does ___ mean?	¿Qué significa ___?
What is this?	¿Qué es esto?
I would like a ___	Quisiera un/a ___
How do you say ___?	¿Cómo se dice ___?
…in English?	…en inglés?
…in Spanish?	…en español?
What do you want?	¿Qué quiere Usted?
What time is it?	¿Qué hora es?
Yesterday	Ayer
Today	Hoy
Tomorrow	Mañana
Where is the doctor?	¿Dónde está el médico?
Who?	¿Quién?
When?	¿Cuándo?
Where?	¿Dónde?
Which?	¿Cuál?
Why?	¿Por qué?
Car	Coche / Carro
Plane	Avión
Bus	Ómnibus / Autobus / Microbús / Combi

7. LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE

Literacy

- Total population over age 15 who can read and write: 94.5%
- Male: 97%
- Female: 92% (2020 estimate)

Early Education

Before the arrival of standardized formal education in Peru, regional inhabitants transmitted values, skills, beliefs, and historical knowledge to younger generations. In the Inca Empire (see *History and Myth*), most education took place in the home, where crafts and trades were transmitted through the generations. A more formal schooling system prepared young Incan nobles for governing tasks. These students spent several years learning history, religion (see *Religion and Spirituality*), Quechua (see *Language and Communication*), and ***quipu*** (or ***khipu***, an accounting system based on tying knots on colored cords) from ***amautas*** (scholars). The Incas also learned ***yupana***, a tabular system for counting and performing simple mathematics. Before fully joining the ranks of the Incan nobility, students were expected to pass a series of rigorous examinations at the end of their schooling.

Spanish Education

During the Spanish colonial era (1533-1824, see *History and Myth*), the primary focus of education was on literacy and instruction in Roman Catholicism (see *Religion and Spirituality*). In 1551, the Dominicans, a Roman Catholic order, founded the ***Real Universidad de la Ciudad de los Reyes*** (Royal University of the City of Kings), present-day ***Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos*** (National University of San Marcos), the first university in South America. Meanwhile, various Roman Catholic orders had established missions and schools, particularly around the capital city of Lima. While some religious schools sought to convert and forcibly assimilate sons of

indigenous elite into Spanish culture, most were reserved for wealthy Spaniards or their ***criollo*** descendants (Spanish people born in the Americas, *History and Myth*). Most poor, indigenous, and ***mestizo*** (mixed Spanish and indigenous) people were uneducated and illiterate.

Education After Independence

After Peru secured its independence in 1824 (see *History and Myth*), successive governments attempted to expand the school system, with Simón Bolívar (see *History and Myth*) mandating the creation of teacher's colleges in every provincial capital. Nevertheless, political instability hindered significant educational development during the first years of independence.

The governments of Ramón Castilla (1845-51 and 1855-62) were the first to advance and consolidate public education under the supervision of local governments (see *History and Myth*). During this time, the central government mandated the creation of a uniform public school system composed of primary, secondary, and university levels. It also implemented identical primary-level curricula for boys and girls nationwide. Further, the government hired European professors to standardize Peruvian and European educational methods.

In 1905, the government introduced additional educational reforms, expanding primary school access in rural areas and bringing education under the control of the central, instead of municipal, government. As such, part of the national budget was designated for education, notably focusing on teachers' salaries. Laws in 1920 and 1941 increased funding for education at the national level and mandated the development of agricultural and industrial studies courses for the establishment of vocational training programs.

The first administration of Belaúnde Terry (1962-68) and the subsequent military junta (1968-75) undertook major changes to the educational system (see *History and Myth*). The former

launched a series of campaigns to decrease illiteracy rates. The latter recognized the right of indigenous Quechua and Aymara (see *Political and Social Relations*) students to be taught in their native languages and sought to codify values and principles of gender equality in the educational system.

Modern Education System

Today, education in Peru is free and compulsory for all citizens, with a mandated minimum of 12 years of schooling starting at age 5. Although most Peruvians attend free government-run public schools, many students enroll in private fee-based schools. In 2023, about 26% of primary school students were enrolled in private schools, compared to the US (9%), and neighboring Colombia (19%), though the figure is substantially lower than that of neighboring Chile (63%). While all public schools and many private schools follow a nationally mandated curriculum, some private schools that cater to wealthier families teach foreign (largely North American and European) curricula and offer instruction in foreign languages such as English, French, German, and Italian. All Peruvian students wear uniforms, regardless of which school they attend.

The Ministry of Education oversees all school accreditation and is tasked with assuring that educators meet national benchmarks. While Peru has improved its educational system in the past 2 decades, many rural and indigenous communities (see *Family and Kinship*) still experience underfunding or overcrowding in local schools. These trends are heightened at the post-secondary level, where many students in rural areas are obligated to travel long distances or relocate to attend.

In 2023, Peru spent about 4% of its GDP on education, around the same as the average for countries in Latin America and the

Caribbean (LAC), but lower than the US (5.4%). In a 2018 assessment of student performance in reading, math, and science, Peru ranked below the US and every other South American country surveyed, with similar scores to Saudi Arabia and Thailand. Likewise, a 2021 study showed that about 56% of

10-year-olds in Peru were unable to read or understand simple text, underscoring the difficulties facing the country's educational system.

While instruction is primarily in Spanish, the government permits education in other native languages. As of 2018, about 1 million children and adolescents have a first language other than Spanish. Although most of these young Peruvians speak Quechua or Aymara, some residents, often in indigenous communities, speak less-common languages (see *Language and Communication*) and may be obliged to take lessons in a language they do not speak. In addition, many students in rural and low-income communities were particularly impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic (see *Sustenance and Health*). Because many families do not have access to Internet services for remote learning (see *Technology and Material*), dropout rates rose in the 2020 and 2021 school years.

Pre-Primary: Children ages 3-4 may attend public or fee-based ***jardines*** (kindergartens). While *jardines* are a common option for children in cities, where both parents often work (see *Family and Kinship*), a lack of proximity to childcare in rural areas makes this option less common for rural Peruvians. One year of mandatory pre-primary education at age 5 prepares students for formal education. In 2023, about 98% of children of the appropriate age were enrolled in pre-primary school.

Basic Education: ***Primaria*** (primary education) begins at age 6 and comprises grades 1-6, which subdivide into three 2-year cycles. Most schools follow the national curriculum, which covers Spanish, English, physical education, arts, religion, social studies, and natural sciences. Students are graded either on a

scale of 1-20 or out of 100 and must earn either a 10 or 70%, respectively, on each course to continue on to the next grade. In 2023, about 99% of children of the appropriate age were enrolled in *primaria*.

Secondary Education: After *primaria*, students must complete 5 years of ***secundaria*** (secondary school). The first 2 years of secondary studies are a continuation of primary school and consist of general education courses. The last 3 years divide into different tracks, with students choosing between academic or vocational programs. While both programs have core curricula similar to that of primary school, vocational studies generally dedicate a significant portion of the school day to technical or agricultural training. In 2022, about 95% of children of the appropriate age were enrolled in *secundaria*.

Post-Secondary School: Generally, Peru has two types of post-secondary institutions: technical schools and traditional universities. Technical schools have the capacity to confer degrees to students who studied in the vocational track during secondary school and include training in the arts, education, and other careers. As public universities are free for Peruvian citizens, traditional universities are highly competitive. To determine admission, each institution typically administers its own entrance exam. Private schools, many of which have less rigorous entrance requirements, have become more popular in recent years. Nevertheless, many private institutions are largely unregulated and have been criticized for catering to wealthier Peruvians and forcing poorer students to acquire predatory loans to access post-secondary education.

Many of the country's top universities are in Lima, and include the ***Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú*** (Pontifical Catholic University of Peru)*, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos*, and the ***Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas*** (Peruvian University of Applied Sciences).

8. TIME AND SPACE

Overview

Peruvians tend to view interpersonal relationships, formality, and etiquette as vital to conducting successful business transactions and often have casual attitudes regarding punctuality in personal and business settings. Their personal space preferences vary by degree of familiarity.

Time and Work

Peru's workweek runs Monday-Friday, though many shops also open on a reduced schedule on the weekends. Normal business hours are 8:30am-5:30pm, with an hour break between 1pm-2pm for lunch. Banks, post offices, and government offices are typically open between 9am-6pm but often close for 1-2 hours midday. Supermarkets typically open daily from 8am-10pm, including on national holidays except for Holy Thursday and Good Friday. In rural areas, operating hours tend to be more informal, varying according to owners' preferences.

Working Conditions: Peruvian labor laws establish a 48-hour workweek, national minimum wage, overtime pay, paid vacation, sick leave, and other benefits. Additionally, many Peruvians receive two annual bonuses called ***aguinaldos***, one on Peru's Independence Day in July and the other during the December holidays. Despite these and other benefits and protections, the combination of lax enforcement and a lack of effective labor unions to advocate for protections often results in unsafe working conditions. Around 72% of Peruvians are engaged in informal employment in 2023 (see *Economics and Resources*), whereby labor codes such as the minimum wage and other workplace standards do not apply.

Time Zone: Peru's time zone, Peru Time (PET), is 5 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Peru's time is identical to

Eastern Standard Time (EST) in the US, and since Peru does not observe daylight saving time, it is 1 hour behind the US Eastern Daylight Saving Time (EDT) during part of the year.

Date Notation: Like the US, Peru uses the Western (Gregorian) calendar. Unlike Americans, Peruvians write the day first, followed by the month and year.

National Holidays

- January 1: New Year's Day
- March/April: ***Jueves Santo*** (Holy Thursday) and ***Viernes Santo*** (Good Friday) (dates vary)
- May 1: Labor Day
- June 29: Feast of Saints Peter and Paul
- July 28-29: ***Fiestas Patrias*** (Independence Day, see p. 5 of *History and Myth*)
- August 30: Feast of Saint Rose of Lima
- October 8: Battle of Angamos (Peru's only naval victory against Chile in the War of the Pacific, see p. 3 of *Aesthetics and Recreation*)
- November 1: All Saints' Day
- December 8: Immaculate Conception
- December 25: Christmas Day

Any holiday that falls on a weekend is observed on the closest weekday.

Time and Business

While most Peruvians value punctuality and generally adhere to deadlines, especially when dealing with foreigners, they often arrive a few minutes late to appointments. For events where punctuality is expected, Peruvians sometimes refer to adhering to ***hora inglesa*** (English time) to denote a strict start time. Conducting business meetings tends to progress more slowly in Peru than in the US, in part because Peruvians prefer to establish both personal and professional relationships first. They often rely on a personal introduction or recommendation from a mutual acquaintance to facilitate business contacts. Initial meetings usually involve substantial polite conversation to

establish rapport (see *Language and Communication*). Business discussions may also occur outside of working hours, during meals, or in more relaxed settings than at an office.

Public and Personal Space

As in most societies, personal space in Peru depends on the nature of the relationship. Most Peruvians maintain an arm's length when conversing with strangers but stand closer to family and friends. Friends may maintain minimal personal space when interacting.

Touch: In business settings, greetings usually include little touching beyond the handshake, though women may clasp hands loosely and exchange cheek kisses. Peruvians usually reserve physical affection for family and friends, and young couples sometimes engage in public displays of affection.

Eye Contact: Peruvians typically make brief, direct eye contact during greetings and maintain eye contact during conversations, as evidence of interest.

Photographs

Some churches, museums, landmarks, and military installations prohibit photography. Foreign nationals should acquire a Peruvian's consent before taking his photo. Explicit permission is particularly important when photographing children and indigenous people.

Driving

In urban areas, roads tend to be well-lit and maintained. Nevertheless, drivers often disobey traffic laws and ignore lane markings while maneuvering congested streets. Honking is common and usually conveys position on the roadway rather than anger. In isolated rural areas, poor road conditions combined with a lack of lighting, signage, and security make driving hazardous. Like Americans, Peruvians drive on the right side of the road. In 2021, Peru recorded 13 traffic fatalities per 100,000 people, lower than the US rate (14).

9. AESTHETICS AND RECREATION

Overview

Peru's clothing, arts, and recreation reflect its rich history, blend of European and indigenous traditions, and ethnic diversity.

Dress and Appearance

Modern: Most Peruvians wear modest, Western-style clothing. Men typically wear shirts and pants, and women dresses or blouses with skirts or pants. Young Peruvians in urban areas often wear jeans with tennis shoes.

Traditional: In rural areas, many men and women wear traditional clothing with vibrant colors and geometric patterns that often vary by region or ethnic group (see *Political and Social Relations*). Most traditional clothing is made from natural fibers such as cotton or alpaca wool.

Men traditionally wear colorful ponchos with varying patterns that reflect their village of origin. While some men wear ponchos over Western-style shirts every day, others only wear them for special occasions like weddings and festivals. Traditionally, handwoven shorts were common and practical for working in the fields. In Patacancha, a southern valley region, men typically wear beige or white ***bayetas*** (woven pants). Many men wear ***chullos*** (knitted hats with ear flaps) under ***sombreros*** (hats with wide brims). Both rural men and women wear ***ojotas*** (sandals made from recycled truck tires) and use a ***lliclla*** (decorated shoulder cape) to carry cargo.

Traditionally, some indigenous Amazonian women wear leather clothing or straw skirts. Many Andean women wear ***juyunas*** (fitted wool jackets decorated with white buttons and embroidery) and ***polleras*** (colorful handwoven skirts). Some women layer their skirts and sometimes wear three or four at

once. Regional ***chumpi*** (belts) are often used to fasten women's skirts or tie men's pants and help support their lower back when carrying heavy goods. Some women use a ***k'eperina*** or ***awayu***, a large colorful shoulder cloth used to carry goods or children.

Most rural women wear hats, often representing status and age. For example, the ***bombín*** (small bowler hat) is traditionally worn on different angles to represent marital status. ***Monteras*** (wide-brimmed colorful hats) are typically filled with decorative fruit and flowers and secured with a beaded ***sanq'apa*** (chin strap). Some women and men wear the ***sombrero celendino*** (a high-topped, wide-brimmed hat) typically worn in Celendín in northern Peru.

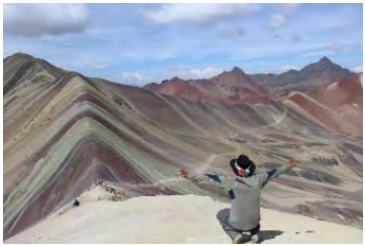
Recreation and Leisure

Peruvians often spend their leisure time with family and friends. Common activities are sharing meals, playing sports and games, and going to bars, ***discos*** (nightclubs), or ***peñas*** (venues where Peruvians gather to eat, drink, and listen to live folk music).

Holidays and Festivals: Peruvians hold a variety of festivals and community celebrations, many reflecting the country's Catholic traditions (see *Religion and Spirituality*). In 2008, the government introduced Reformation Day as a new public-sector holiday in recognition of Peru's growing Protestant population (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

Peru hosts over 3,000 ***fiestas*** (festivals) annually. Each town celebrates its patron saint or the Virgin Mary with a festival, often including dancing and parades. Most Peruvians celebrate the month-long Carnival in February or March, coinciding with the week before Lent. Carnival celebrations often end with a ***yunza***, a custom of chopping down a tree covered with gifts. Some other celebrations vary by region. For example, Cuzco residents blend Catholic and Andean traditions with unique dress and dances. Generally, the festivities include fireworks, music, parades, and processions of dancers in colorful costumes.

Some national holidays commemorate important dates in Peru's history. On July 28, Peru's ***Fiestas Patrias*** (Independence Day) festivities mark its independence from Spain (see *History and Myth*). In Lima, officials hold a 21-gun salute and flag raising ceremony, followed by a large military parade. On October 8, Peruvians mark the Battle of Angamos of the War of the Pacific (see *History and Myth*) by observing Navy Day with military and civil parades held across the country.



Sports and Games

Peruvians participate in a wide variety of sports, such as soccer, volleyball, swimming, basketball, surfing, kitesurfing, deep-sea fishing, climbing, and hiking. Bull-fighting rings are common in northern Andean towns and Arequipa, and Lima hosts larger fights in the Plaza de Acho between July-October. Many towns have a ***coliseo de gallos*** (rooster coliseum), where people watch cockfights. Peruvians have bred ***caballos peruanos de paso*** (Peruvian stepping horses) for over 400 years, making them part of the national heritage. *Paso* horses are known for their high steps, elegance, and equestrian dressage.

Peru participates in numerous international competitions, such as the Summer and Winter Olympics, FIFA World Cup, Pan American Games, ***Copa América*** (America Cup), Bolivarian Games, and World Surf League (WSL) Championship. Sofía Mulánovichia became the first Peruvian and South American champion of the women's WSL in 2004. Other notable athletes are tennis player Alejandro Olmedo, who represented the US and won the Wimbledon singles title in 1959, and volleyball player Natalia Málaga, who won a silver Olympic medal in 1988.

Soccer: ***Fútbol*** (soccer) is Peru's most popular sport, with youth learning through pick-up games or school and amateur leagues. Peru's national team, ***La Blanquirroja*** (The White and Red) won second place at the 2019 *Copa América* and qualified for the 2018 World Cup for the first time in 36 years.

Games: Peruvians play a variety of games. According to an Incan legend, ***sapo*** (toad) originates from a tale about a frog near Lake Titicaca, which protected those who gave it gold coins. In the game, competitors try to throw coins into the mouth of a metal toad atop a box with 25 holes that, along with the toad, have point values.

Music

Andean melodies and wind instruments, African rhythms and percussion instruments, and European harmonies and stringed instruments influence traditional Peruvian music. Some traditional instruments are ***quenas*** (vertical flutes), ***zamponas*** (panpipes), harps, drums, and the ***cajón*** (wood box percussion instrument). The ***charango*** (small guitar, often made from an armadillo shell) is Peru's national instrument.

Huayno is a musical style that blends traditional and Western musical instruments and melodies to create the popular dance music with cheerful rhythms and emotional lyrics. ***Chicha***, or Peruvian ***cumbia***, is a rock-and-roll genre that emerged in the mid-20th century by mixing *huayno* with other traditional and Western musical styles like Dominican ***merengue***, Cuban ***rumba***, and psychedelic rock. Some *cumbia* musicians use electric guitars to play Amazonian and Andean folk melodies.

Música criolla (Creole music) is a popular musical genre influenced by Andean musical instruments and European and African rhythms. Lucha Reyes, an Afro-Peruvian, is one of Peru's most popular and respected *criolla* singers. Some subgenres are ***vals criollo*** (Creole or Peruvian waltz), polka, and ***marinera*** (see "Dance" below). Singer-composer Maria Isabel Granda Larco, known as Chabuca Granda, is one of Peru's most iconic musical artists. She composed *valses criollos* and paved the way for famous Afro-Peruvian performers like Susana Baca and Eva Ayllón. Today, many Peruvians listen to an array of foreign and Peruvian musical styles like pop, rock,

reggaetón (a Spanish Caribbean-based genre), heavy metal, folk, classical, rap, and electronic.

Dance

Peruvian folk dances, some of which preserve traditional cultural expression, vary by region and ethnic group. For example, the *huayno* is a popular musical dance in the Peruvian Andes that incorporates bright, traditional Andean clothing. Commonly performed by couples at festivals and carnivals, its choreography typically includes hops and rhythmic foot stomps. The scissor dance is a Quechuan folk dance from the southern Andes in which dancers wear elaborate costumes while holding scissors, shaking and moving them in sequential choreography similar to an Irish jig. ***Festejo*** is a popular energetic dance among Afro-Peruvians, many of whom live by the central coast, and historically celebrates emancipation from slavery (see *History and Myth*). *Festejo* variations often incorporate flirtatious movements featuring swaying hips and quick turns.

Performed in the region since colonial times, the *marinera* is Peru's national dance and was formally named in honor of the Navy's victory in the Battle of Angamos against Chile. Despite no physical contact between the dancing man and woman, the courtship dance features elegant, synchronized sequences with distinct styles that vary by origin. Today, *marinera* festivals are held throughout Peru. Trujillo, a coastal city northwest of Lima and the dance's birthplace, holds an annual national competition.

Literature

With roots in oral traditions, Peru has a rich literary history. In the 18th century, an unknown author wrote *Ollantáy*, which tells a story in Quechua of the 15th-century Incan court. After independence, literary genres such as Romanticism became common. Author Ricardo Palma wrote *Peruvian Traditions*, a romantic historical narrative about colonial Peru that is rich in folk traditions and stories.

Author Clorinda Matto de Turner wrote *Aves sin Nido* (Birds without a Nest) in 1889, the first notable novel to explore the social conditions of indigenous Peruvians, telling the story of a white man and *mestiza* (mixed indigenous and white) woman. The indigenous focus of Matto de Turner's work was a preview of the ***indigenismo*** movement of the early 20th century, when many authors focused on the relations between indigenous Peruvians and the nation. Novelist José María Arguedas, author of *Yawar Fiesta*, is known for his portrayals of indigenous Andean culture and his ability to mix Spanish and Quechua.

César Vallejo is considered one of Peru's best poets. Influenced by his mixed Spanish and Quechua heritage, depression, and arrest for taking part in an uprising supporting indigenous people, Vallejo's dark poetry in *Trilce* (1922) exposed social themes and human existence. His unconventional poetic prose and use of misspelled words was considered revolutionary at the time. José Carlos Mariátegui was a political writer from the 1920s whose *Seven Interpretive Essays on Reality* covered topics from economic evolution to education.

Spanish-Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa, one of South America's most well-known authors, wrote many works in the second half of the 20th century. His novels explore autobiographical and historical themes such as racial prejudice and corruption. His book *A Fish in the Water* recounts his personal failed attempt to become President in 1990. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2010.

Folk Arts and Handicrafts

Peru has a rich history of arts and ***artesanías*** (handicrafts), including woolen textiles, embroidery, ceramics, silverwork, wood and stone carvings, and jewelry. ***Retablos*** are multi-media wooden boxes with intricate scenes of religious, historical, or everyday events. Figures are often sculpted plaster made from potato flour and gesso (paint). *Retablos* were brought from Spain and traditionally made by Andean artisans in Ayacucho.

10. SUSTENANCE AND HEALTH

Sustenance Overview

Meals are often significant social events, with family and friends lingering for conversation and companionship. Peruvian cuisine reflects the country's agricultural diversity, extensive Pacific coastline, and European, indigenous, East Asian, and African influences.

Dining Customs

Most Peruvians eat three daily meals and snack throughout the day. Traditionally, breakfast and dinner are light, while lunch, served in the early afternoon, is the heartiest meal. Nevertheless, demanding business schedules in urban areas (see *Time and Space*) have influenced smaller, less complex lunches. In much of the country, diners begin lunch and dinner with starters, commonly a simple soup or stew, salad, or ***papas a la huancaína*** (boiled potatoes served with a creamy cheese and pepper sauce, typically topped with black olives and hard-boiled eggs).

When invited to a Peruvian home, guests usually arrive a few minutes late and bring sweets, flowers, or a bottle of wine or liqueur to thank the hosts for their hospitality. Hosts typically serve their guests first, who after finishing their portions, must decline several offers if they do not want additional servings. Diners tend to take their time eating and may linger for hours over lively conversation.

Peru's ethnic diversity (see *Political and Social Relations*) influences culinary traditions and dining customs throughout the country. ***Comida criolla*** (creole food, see p. 4 of *History and Myth*) combines indigenous and European culinary traditions in many dishes. African influences are notable in Peru's coastal regions, where many descendants of enslaved Africans still live (see *History and Myth*). Peru's Chinese and Japanese

communities (see *Political and Social Relations*) mix Peruvian and Chinese or Japanese techniques in ***comida chifa*** / ***nikkei*** (Chinese/Japanese food).

Diet

While varying by region and socioeconomic status, meals tend to highlight animal protein and make ample use of Peru's rich variety of starchy foods. Originating in southern Peru some 7,000 years ago, potatoes form an important part of Peruvian cuisine due to their relative affordability and versatility. Today, Peru is home to over 4,000 varieties of the root vegetable. Along with potatoes, rice and ***choclo*** (a white, large-kernelled corn that predates the introduction of Spanish cuisine) are common ingredients in many dishes and often served independently as side dishes or together.

Beef and chicken are notable proteins in Peruvian cuisine, while alpaca and ***cuy*** (guinea pig) are also popular. Many dishes benefit from Peru's large fishing sector (see *Economics and Resources*), which provides plentiful seafood such as tuna, halibut, bass, cod, shrimp, squid, and scallops. Fresh produce also features prominently, with many types of ***ají*** (peppers), yams, ***palta*** (avocado), and fruits such as ***chirimoya*** (custard apples), mangos, and papaya available throughout the country.

Meals and Popular Dishes

Breakfast in Peru varies significantly by region. In urban areas, continental breakfasts that feature toast, cereal, and eggs are common. In rural areas, the meal tends to be heartier and features stews such as ***adobo arequipeño*** (a stew of pork, ***panca*** and ***rocoto*** peppers, cumin, onions, and garlic), or ***tamales*** (corn dough filled with meats and vegetables and steamed in a plantain leaf). For lunch, dishes are frequently heavier. A popular option is ***ceviche*** (whitefish cured in lime juice with corn, yams, and peppers), which is considered the national dish and consumed along with ***leche de tigre*** ("tiger's

milk," the dish's lime juice marinade). Other common options are ***lomo saltado*** (marinated steak served with onions, peppers, rice, and french fries) and ***ají de gallina*** (chicken stewed with an aromatic *ají* sauce thickened with bread, milk, and cheese).

Dinner is often a smaller meal and typically includes leftovers from lunch or similar dishes. Other options are ***humitas*** (corn paste wrapped and steamed in a corn husk, like a *tamal*), ***pollo a la brasa*** (rotisserie chicken grilled over coals), and ***causa limeña*** (a shaped mold with layers of potato, peppers, chicken, and *palta*). In the Andean highlands, ***pachamanca*** is a common dish for special occasions, whereby meat and potatoes are cooked in a ***huatia*** (underground oven) covered in hot stones. For dessert, Peruvians often have a serving of fresh fruit, ***manjarblanco*** (caramelized condensed milk), or ***suspiro limeño*** (sweetened condensed milk spiced with cinnamon and topped with meringue).

Beverages

Peruvians drink tea and coffee, particularly for breakfast, as well as an assortment of fresh fruit juices throughout the day. Inca Kola, a domestically produced bright yellow bubblegum-flavored soda is especially popular as an accompaniment to *chifa* food and *pollo a la brasa.* Also common is ***chicha morada***, a sweet drink made from purple corn with cinnamon and lime. Peru is famous for its ***pisco***, a clear brandy that is either drunk straight, blended with lime and egg whites as a *pisco* sour cocktail, with ginger ale and bitters in the ***chilcano*** cocktail, or in other cocktail varieties. While *pisco* is a point of national pride, its origin is the source of a long-running dispute with neighboring Chile.

Eating Out

Restaurants in urban centers such as Lima and Arequipa range from upscale establishments specializing in international and local cuisine to ***picanterías*** (inexpensive food stalls). ***Cevicherías*** are common nationwide, but especially in coastal

areas, and specialize in serving various types of *ceviche*. Likewise, ***chifas*** specialize in Chinese food (typically from the Canton region) and can be found throughout Peru. Street food is a popular option, and stalls often sell ***anticuchos*** (skewered beef hearts) or ***picarones*** (sweet fritters). While tipping in most establishments is not expected, a 10% tip is appreciated.

Health Overview

While the overall health of Peruvians has improved in recent decades, they continue to face high rates of non-communicable "lifestyle" diseases and other serious health challenges. Between 2000-23, life expectancy at birth has increased from about 71to 78 years, a figure higher than the average of Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries (76) and equal to the US (78). In the same time period, infant mortality (the proportion of infants who die before age 1) decreased from about 29 deaths per 1,000 live births to 14, the same as the LAC average (14), but higher than the US rate (6).

Traditional Medicine

Traditional medicine consists of the knowledge, practices, and skills that are derived from a native population's beliefs, experiences, and theories. Traditional Peruvian medicine relies on prayer, herbal treatments, and minor surgical procedures to identify and cure the causes of illness, both physical and spiritual. While Incan medical knowledge relied heavily on the use of coca leaves, quinine, and other plant-based remedies, evidence suggests that Incan healers were also well-versed in complex dental and surgical procedures. Today, some Peruvians still use traditional religious and herbal remedies overseen by a ***curandero*** (healer) in addition to or instead of modern Western medicine.

Healthcare System

Peru's healthcare system is a decentralized network composed of five entities, four of which the central government runs. Of these, the largest healthcare provider is the ***Seguro Integral de***

Salud (Integral Health Insurance), which the Ministry of Health and manages, provides basic government-subsidized coverage to residents employed in the informal economy (see *Economics and Resources*). The Ministry of Labor manages a social security fund financed via paycheck deductions and employee contributions, which covers Peruvians employed in formal labor, who constitute about 28% of the population. The armed forces and national police each run their own health insurance system, which cover a smaller percentage of Peruvians.

Peru's private network traditionally caters to wealthy, urban Peruvians. Private hospitals and clinics typically offer a higher standard of care with shorter wait times for procedures. This disparity in the quality and accessibility of medical attention has led to unequal health outcomes among different segments of the population (see *Political and Social Relations*). Many lower-income and rural Peruvians are either unable to access care or must put off necessary procedures due to financial or accessibility challenges.

In 1998, 2008, and 2013, the Peruvian government passed laws designed to improve healthcare accessibility, affirming medical care as a legal right, and seeking to increase coverage and quality. Between 2004-17, the number of Peruvians with some form of healthcare coverage increased from about 37-82%. Likewise, government spending on healthcare has increased since 2011, with expenditures reaching 6% of GDP in 2022. Nevertheless, this rate is significantly below the LAC average (8%) and US rate (17%). In 2019, the government announced a series of benefits reforms, including increased healthcare funding and more public-private healthcare partnerships.

Healthcare Challenges

The leading causes of death are chronic and non-communicable "lifestyle" diseases, which accounted for about 45% of deaths in 2020. Of these, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases,

diabetes, cancer, and neonatal complications are the most common. Preventable “external causes,” such as suicides, car accidents, and other injuries resulted in about 4% of deaths, higher than the US rate (6%). Roadside accidents (see *Time and Space*) have been in the top 10 causes of death for the past decade.

Healthcare professionals cite Peru’s decentralized medical system as a barrier to effective public health measures. A lack of communication among medical providers causes increased pharmaceutical costs and difficulty maintaining continuous care for patients who change provider schemes. Likewise, the lack of centralized planning in resource allocation has underserved rural Andean and Amazonian communities, whose members frequently must travel long distances to receive care at public hospitals that are often understaffed and overburdened by patient needs.

Since the start of the COVID-19 (the disease caused by the coronavirus) pandemic, Peru has had difficulty controlling the spread of the disease. In late 2021, Peru had the world’s highest COVID-19 mortality rate per capita, at about 6,000 deaths per million residents, more than double the US rate (2,400) at the time. This high rate was largely due to a lack of personal protective equipment, most of which was sourced internationally, and underfunded public hospitals with insufficient intensive care units. Likewise, the high levels of Peruvians employed in the informal sector limited the number of workers able to work remotely or practice social distancing at work.

As of 2025, the Peruvian government has confirmed over 4.53 million cases of COVID-19, resulting in about 221,051 deaths. As of 2024 some 84% of Peruvians have completed the initial vaccination protocol.

11. ECONOMICS AND RESOURCES

Overview

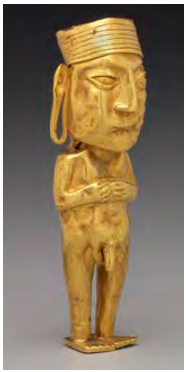
As early as 7000 BC, early inhabitants along the coast of present-day Peru settled in villages, where they farmed, fished, and hunted marine mammals. During the winter, some of them migrated inland to ***lomas*** (patches of vegetation in coastal deserts), where they hunted small game and ate root vegetables and seeds. In the Andes, people cultivated gourds, squash, cotton, lucuma (a native pitted fruit), edible seeded plants, and other crops (see *History and Myth*).

Around 1800 BC, inhabitants began to produce pottery and cloth, which became symbolic of the Chavín civilization around 900 BC (see *History and Myth*). Later groups, like the Nazca and Moche (see *History and Myth*), increased textile, agricultural, and pottery production and built large urban centers. Around 1000 AD, the Chimú (see *History and Myth*) were the first in the region make bronze, which replaced less useful metal alloys. The Chimú also built highly advanced irrigation systems and roads to connect dispersed Andean settlements.

In subsequent centuries, the Inca Empire (see *History and Myth*) used advanced irrigation techniques to grow a variety of edible crops and cotton. They used alpaca and llama wool for textiles and made pottery and jewelry, while conquering people in nearby valleys in their search for more farmland and water resources. The Incas also built a 25,000-mi-long efficient road network staffed by runners, who relayed messages and goods with help from llamas and alpacas. These precisely engineered roads, staircases, causeways, and bridges facilitated trade.

After conquering the Incas in the mid-16th century (see *History and Myth*), the Spanish required that indigenous people pay tribute in silver or work as forced laborers on plantations in what

became known as the ***encomienda*** system. Although Spain formally banned the system in 1542, forced labor and tribute continued under indigenous leaders appointed by the Spanish in a system known as ***mita***. By the mid-17th century, Peru's economy had become the crown jewel in the Spanish Empire, largely due to its wealth of precious metals like silver. However, in the late 18th century, competition with other colonies and labor reforms allowed South American ports to trade directly with Spain instead of first forcing all goods to flow through Peru, which weakened the Peruvian colonial economy.



After Peru secured its independence in 1824 (see *History and Myth*), political instability and war led to economic strife. A major source of government revenue was guano (bat and seabird excrement – a source of nitrogen, phosphates, and potassium), which was plentiful on the coast and islands. By the mid-19th century, Peru also had large coastal plantations, where thousands of Chinese immigrants worked. During this time, Peru abolished indigenous tribute and freed enslaved Africans. By the late 19th century, Peru had become more reliant on foreign loans and investment. Mining, especially of copper and silver, which had declined during the wars of independence, also recovered, and once again became central to Peru's economy.

For much of the 20th century, Peru's reliance on foreign direct investment (FDI) and commodity exports like metals, fish, and agricultural goods, along with shifting economic policies, made it susceptible to price swings and social instability. Discontent with foreign intervention sometimes resulted in violent protests.

In the 1960s, agrarian reforms distributed land to farmers and encouraged indigenous Peruvians to farm in the Andes foothills, which greatly increased agricultural output and exports. In 1969, Peru nationalized industrial subsectors (notably mining, which was consolidated under the state-owned corporation Centromín) and collectivized agriculture. While production initially increased,

the government took out large loans to fund new mining, oil, and infrastructure projects. When commodity prices fell and debt increased in the 1970s, officials changed course and privatized some subsectors, broke up collective farms, and encouraged FDI. Despite a rebound in growth, in the late 1980s, the economy was hampered once again by falling commodity prices and rising foreign debt. In response, Peru refused full repayment of its foreign debt and made a failed attempt to nationalize banks, causing economic collapse and hyperinflation.

In 1990, President Alberto Fujimori implemented austerity measures that lowered inflation but caused incredible hardship for the poor. While the economy grew due to lower inflation, the privatization of state-owned firms (notably mining), FDI, and government repression increased while indigenous communities were marginalized (see *History and Myth*).

Peru entered recession in the early 2000s as global markets struggled and Peru's currency deflated. The ensuing growth in demand for commodities enabled economic growth to return, and Peru weathered the 2008-09 financial crisis better than many countries due to export earnings and FDI from developing nations like China and Brazil. In 2015, a decline in demand for copper caused a downturn. After Peru adopted more free-market policies, the economy rebounded due to increased stability, low inflation, and an influx of FDI.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit Peru hard (see *Sustenance and Health*). The harsh lockdowns and high death toll caused economic activity to decline sharply. As a result, the poverty rate rose from 20-30% between 2019-20 after years of reduction. As of 2024, some 31% of the population live in poverty.

Today, Peru's economy is slowly recovering, and experts predict it will rebound as the pandemic recedes and mining projects resume. However, political instability, social unrest, (see *Political*

and Social Relations), and tightening monetary policy may threaten progress as global economies seek to curtail rising inflation. Peru's reliance on commodities and FDI still makes it vulnerable to global market fluctuations. It also struggles with a large informal sector, as nearly 72% of Peruvians work in informal roles with poor wages and labor conditions (see *Time and Space*). Income inequality, especially between rural and urban residents, is also significant, as rural Peruvians tend to be much poorer than city dwellers (see *Political and Social Relations*).

Services

Services is the largest sector of Peru's economy, accounting for about 51% of GDP and 60% of employment in 2024. Major subsectors include tourism, banking and financial services, and telecommunications.

Tourism: In 2023, tourism contributed approximately 7% to GDP and employed about 6.8% of Peruvians. Most tourists travel to Peru to visit Incan and early Spanish colonial sites (the most well-known of which are the Incan ruins at Machu Picchu), and to explore natural scenery along the coast or in the Andes. The over 2.5 million tourists who visited Peru in 2023 came from the Chile, US, Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, and other countries.

Banking: Peru has a well-capitalized banking system with four privately held banks, three of which are Peruvian-owned. Peru also has several state-owned banks and financial institutions, the largest of which is ***Banco de la Nación*** (Bank of the Nation).

Telecommunications: This subsector contributed just under 5% of GDP in 2020. It has grown rapidly in recent years, which will likely persist in the coming years as Peru's telecommunications infrastructure continues to grow, particularly in rural areas (see *Technology and Material*). In

2022, the Peruvian telecommunications subsector generated about $14.6 billion in revenue.

Industry

The industrial sector accounts for about 34% of GDP and 16% of the labor force. Major subsectors are mining, mineral refining, oil and natural gas production, and manufacturing.

Mining and Minerals: In 2024, mining accounted for about 9% of GDP and 64% of total exports. Peru is the world's second-largest producer of copper, silver, and zinc, and in 2023 Latin America's second largest producer of gold behind Mecico. Peru also has large tin and lead deposits. Copper and gold account for nearly 81% of Peru's export value. Today, about 200 mines operate in Peru, with additional projects planned for development. Many mines are foreign-owned and in the Andes. Although Peru exports most minerals in raw form, it also has a mineral refining sector focused on smelting and refining copper.

Oil and Natural Gas: Peru is the seventh-largest oil producer in Latin America. Refined oil products, notably petroleum gas, accounted for 9% of total export value in 2024. Peruvian oil refineries produce petroleum gas, gasoline, kerosene, and other products. In 2015, Peru had six refineries with plans to build more. It has Latin America's fourth largest natural gas reserves and produced about 13 billion cu m of natural gas in 2017.

Agriculture

This sector accounts for nearly 7% of GDP and employs about 24% of Peruvians. Due to its mountainous and often arid climate, only about 3% of Peru is naturally arable. An initiative to increase agricultural production through job creation and implementation of new technology helped increased exports from $645 million in 2000 to about $7.8 billion in 2020. This initiative also focused on creating opportunities for women in agriculture, and in 2024, they accounted for about 25% of the agricultural workforce.

Farming: Major crops in Peru are sugar cane, potatoes, rice, plantains, corn, cassava, oil palm fruit, and grapes. Along the coast, cattle, poultry (mostly chickens), pigs, and goats are the most common livestock. In the Andes, camelids like llamas and alpacas are raised for their wool and meat. ***Cuy*** (guinea pigs) are native to Peru and raised for meat (see *Sustenance and Health*). Along the arid coast, the expansion of farming has led to water scarcity (see *Political and Social Relations*).

Fishing: Peru is one of the world's largest producers of wild caught fish, primarily anchovies, most of which are used to produce fishmeal for animal feed and fish oil. Other catches include bonito, mackerel, sea bass, swordfish, herring, tuna, drum, shark, and others.

Currency

Adopted in 1991, the Peruvian ***nuevo sol*** (shortened to ***sol***–S/ or PEN) is issued in three coins (1, 2, 5) and five banknotes (10, 20, 50, 100, and 200, pictured A *sol* divides into 100 ***centimos*** issued in four coins (5, 10, 20, and 50). From 2017-25, US$1 ranged between S/3.2-4.1.

Foreign Trade

Peru's exports, which totaled $60.7 billion in 2023, consisted primarily of copper ore, gold, refined copper, petroleum gas, and animal meal and pellets sold to China (36%), the US (14%),), EU (11%), Canada (5%), and India (4%). In the same year, Peru's imports totaled $52.3 billion and consisted of refined petroleum, broadcasting equipment, computers, cars, and crude petroleum from China (26%), the US (21%), EU (9%), Brazil (7%), Argentina (5%), and Mexico (3%).

Foreign Aid

Peru is a recipient of foreign aid, primarily for alleviating rural poverty and ensuring political and economic stability. In 2021, Peru received over $303 million in official development aid and assistance toward these goals, with $158 million from the US.

12. TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIAL

Overview

In recent decades, Peru's physical and telecommunications infrastructures have grown considerably yet still face challenges due to economic and geographical barriers, especially in rural areas. Although media freedom is protected by law, Peru's robust defamation laws intimidate journalists, and disinformation has increased in recent years.

Transportation

Most Peruvians travel by bus in cities and over longer distances. While bus fares tend to be cheap, Peruvian buses are known to be late and have inconsistent schedules. Many cities lack a main bus terminal, and routes can be difficult to determine. Personal vehicle ownership is relatively low, with only about 88 cars per 1,000 people as of 2020. Taxis are widely available in big cities. Although many Peruvians use bikes, chaotic driving conditions in cities make biking dangerous (see *Time and Space*).

Roadways: Only about 16,700 mi of Peru's 105,000 mi of roadways are paved. Peru's size, geography, and large swathes of sparsely populated land make travel by road between regions or to remote parts of the country difficult. Some rural roads are poorly maintained and treacherous, particularly in mountainous areas. Nevertheless, Peru's road network continues to expand, particularly to meet the needs of tourists.

Railways: Peru's 1,200 mi of railways operate on separate rail networks due to the mountainous geography, which makes the development of a single national network difficult. Many of Peru's railways transport passengers, particularly tourists (see *Economics and Resources*), and the Peruvian Central Railway is a United Nations World Heritage Site. Peru also has a few freight lines, many of which transport minerals from mines in the Andes to ports (see *Economics and Resources*).

Ports and Waterways: Peru has about 5,600 mi of navigable waterways, mostly on Amazon River tributaries in the Northeast and Lake Titicaca in the South. Major river ports include Iquitos, Pucallpa, and Yurimaguas. Peru's 1,500 mi of Pacific coastline are critical to trade, with major seaports in Callao, Matarani, and Paita. Callao is the largest container port on South America's western coast.

Airways: Peru has 174 airports, 59 of which have paved runways. Lima's Jorge Chávez Airport is the country's main hub, serving 24.5 million passengers in 2024. Peru currently has six airlines. LATAM Peru, a subsidiary of Santiago, Chile-based LATAM Airlines Group, is the national flag carrier based in Lima and flies to 49 global destinations, primarily in the Americas.

Energy

As of 2023, Peru generates around 55% of its energy from fossil fuels and 54% from renewables. The government has expanded renewable energy production in recent years. Peru has tapped into their renewable potential to successfully reduce their dependence on fossil fuels. Today, most of Peru's renewable energy comes from hydroelectric power generation. Peru also has about 1,150 mi of oil, 950 mi of natural gas, and 420 mi of petroleum gas pipelines.

Media

While Peruvian law protects freedoms of expression and the press, journalists and media outlets face threats and prosecution under Peru's defamation laws, especially when covering criticism of or corruption in the government, environmental issues like illegal logging, and drug trafficking. Journalists are regularly convicted of defamation, though their sentences are typically suspended. Transparency has become an issue, as the government increasingly denies access to official information. While journalist murders have decreased in recent years, some journalists report intimidation and assaults. Some political figures have bribed media outlets for favorable coverage. Media

ownership is also highly concentrated. A few large corporations control many TV, radio, and print media outlets.

Print Media: Peru has robust print media offering many daily, weekly, and monthly newspapers and magazines. Most national print media is based in Lima, though smaller cities also have local papers. National dailies include *El Comercio, La República, El Peruano* (which is state-owned), and *Correo*. *The Peruvian Times* is a major English-language newspaper. In addition to news-based coverage, Peru has many tabloid-style publications focused on sports and entertainment that are widely available for purchase, often from street vendors.

TV and Radio: TV is a popular source of news and entertainment. Peru has 10 major national TV networks, of which only one (*TV Perú*) is state-owned. Peruvians can purchase multi-channel cable packages and get international programming via satellite TV. Radio is also popular and a vital source of news and information, particularly in rural areas, where TV stations are less accessible. Peru has about 5,000 radio stations that offer news, entertainment, and sports content. Most programs broadcast in Spanish, though some are in Quechua, Aymara, or English (see *Language and Communication*).

Telecommunications

Although Peru's telecommunications network covers many rural areas, some remote regions lack coverage. In 2023, Peru had only 4 landlines per 100 people (the lowest density in South America). In 2023, Peru had 122 mobile phone subscriptions per 100 residents. The government has made network expansion a priority, as most Peruvians communicate via mobile devices.

Internet: About 75% of Peruvians access the Internet daily. With the rapid expansion of mobile phone use, Peru has only about 10 broadband subscriptions per 100 people. While Internet access is generally unrestricted, the Peruvian government occasionally blocks access to some websites.

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