

Peru - OVERVIEW

Updated: May 30, 2014



Country Name Long Form: Republic of Peru

Government Type: Constitutional Republic

Languages Spoken: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara

National Flag



Peru is a Tier II Country. Significant security measures are necessary.

	Overall Assessment	Political Violence	Crime	Terrorism	Travel Safety
Peru					
Key: (L) Low – (M) Medium – (H) High – (C)Critical					

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Political Violence is rated at HIGH in Peru

There is little anti-American sentiment in Peru; however certain sectors of Peruvian society including illegal coca growers, resent U.S. counternarcotic policies. Others blame U.S. foreign and economic policies for their difficult economic situation.

Unrest and civil disorder usually last from a few days to a few weeks and is usually manifested by political demonstrations that at times become violent.

Most demonstrations in Lima take place in and around the historic downtown area near the Presidential Palace and Congress, although some do occur elsewhere. Marching groups of demonstrators often force the temporary closure of streets. Political demonstrations take place throughout the country, sometimes paralyzing road traffic for a few days. Demonstrators often block areas of the Pan-American Highway, the main north-south thoroughfare located along the western coastal area of the country.

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Protest and public demonstrations have the possibility to occur frequently in cities in the interior of the country.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is assessed as MEDIUM

There is a medium threat of terrorism in Peru, stemming primarily from the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) terrorist group. The Shining Path has been designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the United States on account of the group's violent activities in the 1980s and 1990s. Although the Shining Path has suffered major setbacks as a result of an ongoing government offensive, it remains a threat and has established a significant presence in narcotics trafficking.

The Colombian based Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is believed to maintain a presence in the northern rural reaches of Loreto region, bordering Colombia. Although the group has not conducted any significant attacks in Peru, its presence poses a threat to those in this part of the country.

RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave Peru a score of 38, indicating that the country has medium levels of corruption. The CPI rates countries by the perceived levels of corruption in their public sector, with the least corrupt country receiving a maximum score of 100.

CRIME

Crime is assessed as HIGH

Crime is a constant problem in Lima and most other parts of Peru. Street crime is prevalent in most urban areas, especially in Lima. Pickpocketing, purse snatching, "smash and grab" robberies, the theft of items from unoccupied vehicles, and the theft of vehicle parts (mirrors, lights, etc.) are common crimes. Electronics (especially cameras, laptops, GPS, smart phones, I-Pods, etc.) rank high on the list of items that criminals target. All U.S. and foreign visitors are vulnerable to crime, as they are often perceived to be wealthier than the local population and more likely to be carrying greater amounts of cash and other valuables.

Residential burglaries, mostly of single family homes, occur on a regular basis. Residential burglaries are most common during the day, on weekends, or holidays when houses are left vacant. Thieves often gain entry by exploiting unsecured entryways, tricking domestic employees, or forcing access to perimeter doors when the home is vacant.

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Violent crime has increased over the last few years, especially crimes of opportunity such as robbery, carjacking, vehicle thefts, and kidnapping. Armed robberies, assaults, express kidnappings, carjacking, burglaries and petty theft are a daily fact of life.

Credit card fraud is rampant, and many travelers have reported the theft of their card number while traveling in Peru.

KIDNAPPING

The number of kidnappings for ransom country-wide is underreported, based on information received at the U.S Embassy. The targets are usually the wealthy or assumed wealthy person residing in affluent areas.

“Express kidnappings,” primarily short-term and geared toward robbery of personal possessions and ATM/bank withdrawals, are a problem throughout Peru. Often the criminals perpetrating these kidnappings are taxi drivers working as part of an organized criminal group. In Arequipa, express kidnappings have become such a problem that all U.S. Embassy personnel are prohibited from hailing taxis off of the street.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assaults do occur very frequently on public transportation. There have been reports of various assaults, including groping, public exposure, public masturbation, and rape aboard buses and the metro rail (the metro is located in Lima). It is best to avoid public transportation when possible, especially if traveling alone.

While walking in public during the day, men may stare at women, especially if they appear to be foreign. Occasionally they might make comments or ‘cat calls’. These gestures are typically harmless and can be ignored.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Earthquakes occur with relative frequency in Peru as the country is located in the circum-Pacific seismic belt. There have been several devastating earthquakes throughout Peru’s history, and Peru has the highest rating for seismic activity assigned by the U.S. Department of State.

The rainy season generally runs from November to May in the Peruvian Andes. Floods and mud/landslides are another issue when traveling in Peru. They occur with frequency during the rainy season and often result in road closures for extended periods. Although the west coastal region does not receive much precipitation, the mountainous Andes and jungle regions to the east experience significant precipitation during the rainy season.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Create an emergency kit for earthquakes.

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- Stay in groups, travel in a caravan consisting of two or more vehicles, and stay on the main roads.
- Ensure that someone not traveling with you is aware of your itinerary.
- Avoid hotels that do not have adequate security.
- Intercity travel after dark anywhere in should be avoided.
- It is preferable to stay in the main tourist destinations.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings, especially when walking or driving in Peru.
- Official taxis are a suitable means of travel in daylight hours in urban areas. It is highly recommended that taxis be arranged through your hotel, or program office. Negotiate the price in advance.
- Women should be especially careful when traveling alone and avoid staying out late without a trusted male escort.
- Make sensible security precautions to mitigate the risk of petty crime, particularly pick pocketing and bag snatching.
- Carry a photocopy of your passport when traveling to avoid losing it in a robbery.
- Do not resist if you are being robbed and avoid eye contact and to not make any sudden movements. Victims have been killed when they resisted attack or refused to give up their money or other valuables.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and keep a low profile.
- Never leave your belongings unattended.
- Carry bags close to your body and make sure the fasteners are secure.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or wearing expensive jewelry or valuables.
- Leave all important documents in a safe or safe deposit box at your hotel and only carry certified copies.
- Trust your instincts. If someone or something makes you uneasy, avoid the situation.

Important contact details:

International dialing code: +51

International dialing prefix: 00

Victims of crime in should contact the following phone numbers for assistance:

POLICE: The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in is 105

FIRE DEPARTMENT: 105

AMBULANCE: 105

Note: Police, ambulance or fire department response may be unreliable in some parts of the country.

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TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY

- Roads and utility infrastructure are in adequate standard.
- Most intercity highways are in good condition, although a lack of signage, adequate lighting, and the presence of pedestrians and animals make night time road travel hazardous.
- Electricity infrastructure in Peru is adequate.
- Road conditions in the rural areas of the country are generally poor with many roads either potholed or unpaved.

RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- No road travel after dark.
- No driving if unfamiliar with road condition in Peru.
- No use of ATMs after dark.
- No use of jet-skis or other water sports equipment unless you are an experienced user.
- No use of Taxis unless pre-arranged from trusted local company.

HEALTH

The provision of medical care in Peru is adequate in Lima, but limited in the outlying rural areas. Private medical facilities are available in the capital, but serious medical conditions may require evacuation to a nearby country with better facilities. It should be noted that some doctors or medical centers will expect immediate payment for services. Pharmacies are widely available in Lima, most are well-supplied and open 24 hours a day. Some medical practitioners may speak limited or no English; a Spanish translator may be required.

- Tap water in Peru is generally not safe to drink; travelers are advised to consume only sterilized or bottled water. This applies to water used for brushing teeth, making ice or washing foods.
- It is highly recommended not to bathe or swim in rivers.
- Pasteurized milk can normally be found in major cities, hotels and resorts. Unpasteurized milk should be boiled before consumption, or powdered or tinned milk should be used as an alternative.
- Fruit and vegetables should only be consumed if they have been peeled or cooked.
- Undercooked meat and fish should not be consumed. Food from street vendors should be avoided as this carries a higher risk of causing infection.

The following vaccinations are recommended or required if travelling to Peru:

- Hepatitis A (recommended)
- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Rabies (recommended)
- Typhoid (recommended)
- Yellow Fever (required for travelers arriving from a country where yellow fever is present)

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It is also important to ensure that routine vaccinations are up to date for diseases including influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

Significant Diseases:

- **Malaria** – A life threatening parasitic disease transmitted by mosquitoes. The malaria risk in Peru is prevalent in the low-lying regions of the country. High-risk areas include the Puerto Maldonado and Loreto departments.
- **Dengue Fever** – A life threatening parasitic disease transmitted by the Aedes mosquito. The dengue fever risk is greatest in the country's densely populated and rural areas during the rainy season.
- **Diarrhea** – An illness caused by a bacteria, virus or parasite. One of the most common causes is a bacterium known as E. coli, which is transmitted by ingesting contaminated food and liquids.
- **Chagas' Disease** – A tropical parasitic disease caused by a protozoan parasite. It is mostly transmitted to humans by contact with feces of triatomine bugs, known as 'kissing bugs', among other names depending on the geographical area. It's found mainly in endemic areas across large parts of Peru. Worst affected areas include the south western departments of Arequipa, Moquegua, Tacna and Ica, the northwestern coastal regions of La Libertad, Lambuyequé, Piura and Tumbes, and the northeastern departments of Amazonas, Cajamarca and San Martín.
- **Plague** – A Disease caused by a bacterium, which mainly infects rats and is spread by fleas. There are three types of plague. The most common is the bubonic form, which is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected flea.
- **Yellow Fever** – A viral infection spread by mosquitos. It's prevalent in large parts of Peru's jungle areas, particularly in the low-lying regions of the country; worst affected areas include the Amazonas and San Martín departments.

HOSPITALS –

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Tel: +51 616 89 00

Clinica Ricardo Palma
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Clinica San Felipe

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Lima
Tel: +51 1 219 0000

US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS

United States Embassy Lima

Avenida La Encalada cdra. 17 s/n
Surco
Lima, Peru
Tel: +51 (1)618 2000
Fax: +51 (1)618 2397
Email: limaACS@state.gov

USF INTERNATIONAL HOTLINE

USF 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 813-317-5815

AXA Assistance 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 1-877-577-9504 / +1-203-399-5130 (Call collect from abroad)

ASSIST ID #: GLMN 04983932. <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/resources/>

* Information derived from CIA World Fact Book, US Department of State, OSAC, and Travel Guard. This travel overview summarizes some of the most important concerns; however, it does not negate the need for detailed trip planning.