



Peru Country Packet

Updated April 2019



Maranatha in Peru

The Seventh-day Adventist message trickled into Peru in the early 1900's as missionaries entered the country from Chile. In 1911 a missionary couple named Fernando and Ana Stahl worked for ten years in the Lake Titicaca region with the Aymara and Quechua Indians and later moved to the Amazon region until they retired in 1939. Sixty-five years later, in 2004, the Adventist Church in Peru was thriving and one of the fastest growing Adventist memberships worldwide. However, they didn't have the church buildings to accommodate such growth. Many congregations were either sharing a church or renting space in order to meet each Sabbath. In 2004, the church leadership requested Maranatha's assistance. We agreed to complete nearly 100 churches as part of Maranatha's initiative to build 1,000 churches in 1,000 days. We completed this commitment in 2006 and moved on to other countries in Central and South America in need of assistance.

In 2018, Maranatha received another request for churches and school classrooms from the Adventist Church in South America and the North and South regions of Peru. The churches and schools that Maranatha built in the mid 2000s have resulted in further growth, leaving Peru in need of more space for worship and education. Maranatha agreed to help Peru, and projects will begin in December 2019.

Volunteer Opportunities

In Peru, Maranatha will focus on church construction consisting of concrete floors, steel frames, and roofs. Maranatha has also committed to building school classrooms throughout the country. Some church projects will include block walls with materials funded by the local conference, church members, or volunteer groups. Volunteer projects typically combine construction with community outreach in the form of medical clinics and children's programs. However, the details of each project vary, depending on the volunteers, availability of opportunities, and needs of the local church.

Project Funding

The local church is responsible for providing the land and labor to excavate the site. Maranatha has agreed to raise funds to help subsidize the building costs in Peru. These funds are provided by donations from individuals, churches and school groups, and businesses, as well as the donors of the \$10 Church program. If you or your team is interested in helping to sponsor a church or school in Peru, please speak with Maranatha for more information.

Peru Overview

Peru is located in South America, along the western coast. Peru is the quintessential South American country: a land of magnificent lost cities and a rich cultural heritage. It has attracted travelers throughout the years who are eager to see the wealth of its history and natural beauty.

From the 13th century until the Spanish conquest in the 16th century, the Inca Empire ruled much of the Andean region with a population in the tens of millions. The capital of the Incan empire was located in Cusco, Peru, near the Urubamba Valley in the Andes. In 1532 Spanish conquistadors, led by Francisco Pizarro, defeated and captured the Inca Emperor, which started a decades-long campaign to conquer the region. By the end of the 1570s, the indigenous population had dramatically collapsed due to exploitation and epidemic diseases brought by the Spaniards; many of the Amerindians were forced into slave labor as silver and gold mining became the main economic activity. In 1821, the liberator of Argentina and Chile, José de San Martín, occupied Lima and declared Peruvian independence. After dozens of years of military rule and a civil war, Peru returned to democratic leadership in 1980. Poverty and unemployment levels have fallen dramatically in the recent years, especially in urban areas, and today Peru is the 48th largest economy in the world. However, this economic boom doesn't impact the lives of every Peruvian, and there are still impoverished communities in more rural areas of the country.

Geography and Climate

Peru is a country of astounding natural diversity. The country has three distinct regions: the Amazon Basin to the northeast, the mountainous highlands running down the center of the country, and the western coastline characterized by a narrow band of deserts and fertile valleys where the rivers meet the ocean. In each of these regions the landscape and climate varies drastically. The Amazon region contains more than 60 percent of the country's area and has a tropical climate that is generally, sunny, warm, and humid, year-round. This area is at risk of deforestation due to illegal logging. Up in the Andes, rainfall varies throughout the region, but the high altitude makes for cold nights and relatively cool days. In the valleys of the Andes visitors will see terraced family farms. Approximately 18.5 percent of the surface area of Peru is made up of agriculture—primarily root vegetables in the mountains.

Culture

Peru's culture is as diverse as its geography. When Spain ruled over the region, much of the local culture was mixed with Spanish culture to create a unique blend of hispanic and native traditions. The easiest place to see this unique mix is in the architecture and artwork of the cathedrals. Catholicism is the predominant religion, but many local traditions have been mixed into the Catholic art inside the churches. Visitors to the Cathedral Basilica in Cusco's main square will see a depiction of the Last Supper by Marcos Zapata, a Quechua painter, which shows Jesus and the twelve disciples gathered around a dinner of Cuy, a local Quechua delicacy (guinea pig).

Throughout the many years of Spanish rule, the Quechua and Aymara people, two cultural groups that descended from the Incas, have carefully preserved and developed their cultures. The old Incan capital of Cusco is perceived as the cultural capital of the country. In much of Peru, and specifically the Andean highlands, you will find women dressed in brightly colored pleated skirts, called polleras, shirts with intricate embroidery, and bowling hats.

Facts & Figures

Capital:	Lima
Nationality:	Peruvian
Population:	31,331,228 (July 2018)
Poverty:	23%
Unemployment:	15%
Languages:	Spanish, Quechua, Aymara
Life Expectancy:	74.2 years
Climate:	Varies by region and altitude. Dry in the west, tropical in the east, temperate to frigid in the Andes
Religion:	Catholic 60%, Protestant 15%, Unspecified 21%
Industries:	Mining, petroleum and natural gas, fishing, textiles,
Exports:	Copper, gold, lead, zinc, petroleum, natural gas, coffee, vegetables, textiles, fish
Currency:	Peruvian Sol
Time Zone:	GMT – 05:00 (same as Central Daylight Savings Time)

Lima is the most populated city in Peru, and many young people have been moving from the rural areas to the urban centers on the coast. Once they arrive, they often adopt western clothing, music, and culture; much of the old way of life is left behind.

Peruvian food, however, permeates every aspect of urban and rural life. Most meals are composed of traditional staples such as corn, potatoes, rice, and yucca. Along the coastline, ceviche, a dish of raw fish marinated in citrus juice, is commonly found and is considered the national dish. Soups, stews, and meat are common.

In Peru's Amazonian region there are several tribes of indigenous people groups who live, for the most part, in voluntary isolation. Their life is primitive, but their culture is vibrant. Many of these groups are threatened today by deforestation and poisoning due to natural gas extraction taking place in the region.

Cultural Sensitivity

Maranatha's volunteer experience includes meeting new people and learning how to serve them. Every culture has a unique view of the world. It is important to enter another culture with humility, respect, and understanding of their traditions. Sometimes you may observe something in Peru that will be very different from what you're accustomed to. It does not make it wrong—just different. Be respectful and consider their perspective.

Being sensitive to a culture also means being respectful to micro-cultures, such as Adventism, within a larger culture. Adventists in Peru tend to be more conservative than Adventists in the United States or Canada. We try to be sensitive to this by asking volunteers to dress as modestly as possible. Pants and cap sleeves are preferred to shorts and tank tops. For church activities, women need to have skirts or dresses reaching past the knees, and men need to wear ties and closed-toe shoes, especially if they are involved in platform activities.

Planning a Project

Partnering with Maranatha

There are many reasons to plan a project with Maranatha. After nearly 50 years of focus on construction-oriented mission projects, the organization has this process mastered.

- **Maranatha has a great track record.** From local church members to church officials to volunteer team leaders—everyone recognizes that Maranatha is reliable and gets things done. We know that the details are important. Maranatha will always have your worksite prepared and support you in creating a successful project for your team.
- **Maranatha provides local support.** It is a huge help to have someone at your location, before your arrival, to scout out details and make arrangements for your group. Once your group arrives our volunteer support person will be around to help as a translator and navigate the inevitable bumps in the road.
- **Maranatha provides quality construction support.** You don't have to be a construction expert to build a project with Maranatha. Our qualified crew will prep the project site before you arrive, and they will stay to teach and assist the volunteers throughout the project. You won't just build a church or school—you will do it right!
- **Maranatha office support is available as you plan.** Maranatha has a group project specialist dedicated to answer your questions and provide resources so you can effectively plan your project and work with your group members.
- **Maranatha is an independent organization, but we work hand-in-hand with church leadership around the world.** Every Maranatha project in Peru has been selected and approved by Adventist leadership in Peru as a priority for growth. This means your project will have the full, long-term support of the larger church.

Accommodations

Most leaders of Maranatha projects choose to have the group stay in a basic hotel. While there are many places with varying comfort and price levels, you should expect a rather simple hotel.

Check with the project packet or your group leader for specific information regarding bed linens, towels and washcloths, hot water, air-conditioning, Wi-Fi availability, and eating facilities.

Excursion Options

Many projects will include an opportunity to see a little of the country you're visiting. To find the best excursion for your trip, try searching online. Look for peer ratings on various activities through sites like Trip Advisor. Guidebooks published by Lonely Planet or Frommer's are also good places to start. Maranatha has a few recommended excursions or activities that other groups have done in the past. Be sure to ask what is the best option for your group.

Attractions

Amazon Region (Iquitos) | Much of the northeastern part of Peru is covered with the western edge of the Amazon Rainforest. This region has a lot of adventure tourism options such as rafting, ziplining, and canopy tours. The city of Iquitos is located right on the banks of the Amazon River and is the base for many of these activities. There are many small rescue organizations that work with abandoned monkeys, sloths, and reptiles. Animal wildlife tours will give visitors opportunities to see jungle animals, reptiles, and birds. For those wanting a multi-night excursion, staying at jungle lodges is a great way to take part in eco-tourism.

Cusco | Located high in the Andes, Cusco was once the capital of the Incan Empire. It is a beautiful city to explore with many architectural examples of Andean heritage and Spanish colonization. While a wonderful destination in itself, most people stop in Cusco on their way to other attractions because the surrounding mountains boast some of the richest culture and most beautiful views in all of Peru. The region is often referred to as the Sacred Valley or the Urubamba Valley, and Incan ruins, salt mines, agricultural terraces, and great hiking trails are scattered throughout the land. Ausangate Mountain, also known as Rainbow Mountain, a fantastic full-day hike located about three hours southeast of Cusco. The mountain range is covered in bands of different colored sand and exposed minerals that look like they've come straight out of a painting. Cusco is higher than 11,000 feet elevation and some nearby sights will be even higher, so be aware of the early signs of altitude sickness.

Lake Titicaca (Puno) | High in the Andes mountains, this lake forms a portion of the Bolivia-Peru border. It is the world's highest navigable body of water, and it is famous for its high elevation, crystal clear water, floating reed islands and unique reed-constructed boats. Lake Titicaca is definitely on the must-see list. Visitors can take all-day boat tours as well as take tours of the floating islands to see the local culture.

Lima | Lima is the capital of Peru and a very modern city with more than 10 million residents, making it one of the largest South American cities. Some may not consider it a tourist destination on its own, there is plenty to see in Lima. The Historic Centre of the city was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and tourists can see examples of colonial architecture, including the Monastery of San Francisco. Visitors can tour parts of the monastery as well as an extensive set of catacombs beneath the building. In the center of the Miraflores district is a preserved archeological site, an adobe and clay pyramid called Huaca Pucllana. Originally it served as a pre-Incan administrative center and ceremonial site, but now it is a center dedicated to preserving this piece of culture through life-like dioramas and a small museum.

Machu Picchu (Cusco) | Machu Picchu has been voted one of the "New" Seven Wonders of the World and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This Incan city was built in 1450 as an estate for the Incan emperor, and it was abandoned 100 years later during the Spanish Conquest. It is truly a sight to behold as you come up over the hill and gaze into the ruins below. The mountain peak of Huayna Picchu stands above the city and alpacas roam around the grassy plateaus. Most visitors will start in Cusco then travel by train to the small town of Aguas Calientes, which is located at the entrance to the ruins. Adventurous travelers can also access to the ruins by hiking the Incan Trail.

Foreign Cash and Money Exchange

Peru uses the Peruvian sol. The exchange rate varies daily and will depend on where you make the exchange. In April 2019 the exchange rate was approximately 3.3 Soles to 1 U.S. dollar. Any cash you bring should be in new, unmarked U.S. bills.

You can exchange money at an airport exchange booth or at a bank. Often your project coordinators will help exchange money at a simple, rounded rate.

ATMs will allow you to withdraw soles directly and will probably give you the best exchange rate. There are ATMs usually in the airport, at major shopping centers, and at banks. Sometimes they can be hard to find and unreliable.

Credit/Debit Cards

While some establishments accept credit and debit cards, it might be easier to use cash while traveling through the country. If you do use a credit or debit card, expect a 5% - 12% surcharge for international use. Be careful when using your credit card in public; never let it out of your sight. It is wise to let your credit card company know in advance the dates you will be in Peru so they don't block your card when you use it in a foreign country.

Traveler's Checks

Traveler checks are not widely accepted, and commissions can be high.

Electricity

The standard current in Peru is 220-240 volt AC. Many appliances now are dual-voltage (you can check for this on the tag on the charger). For any small, non-dual-voltage appliances (hair dryers, electric shavers, camera chargers), you will need a plug adapter and voltage converter. Voltage converters can be found at most stores like Walmart or Target for about \$20.

Most appliances will also need a plug adapter. The standard outlets have two horizontal prongs of the same height (Type A). In some places outlets will have two round prongs (Type C). Many outlets will be able to accommodate both types of plugs. International plug adapters can be found in sets or individually at many stores. You can also buy adapters for grounded to ungrounded plugs at most stores and hardware stores. Electrical surges and outages can be common. You should use a surge protector for expensive appliances and computers.



Laundry

Most cities and large towns have full service laundromats. Many hotels also provide laundry service but often charge per item of clothing, which adds up fast. You can also choose to do your laundry by hand at no additional cost.

Communication

Technology has increased so much that we can stay connected around the world.

Cell phone service is available in most moderate-sized cities throughout the country, but rural areas still experience limited service. You can use your own phone and service plan, but check international rates and service areas since international roaming and data charges can be very expensive. You can avoid unexpected charges by putting your phone on airplane mode and limiting all data usage to WiFi areas. You can also consider the T-Mobile Simple Choice Plan, which offers free international data and texting and discounted calling in more than 115 countries around the world.

Local cell phones can be also be purchased for relatively cheap, and you can reload minutes to call locally and internationally for reasonable rates. You can also buy a SIM card for your unlocked device.

To call Peru from the U.S., enter the international access code (011) + the Peru country code (51) + the local number.

To call the U.S. from Peru, enter the U.S. country code (1) + the local area code and phone number. For example, to call the Maranatha office you would dial 1 (916) 774-7700.

You can also communicate through free smart phone and computer apps such as WhatsApp, Viber, FaceTime, and Skype. WiFi is available at hotels and restaurants throughout the country, and Internet cafes are also popular.

Time Zone

When the United States is on Standard Time, Peru is three hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time, two hours ahead of Mountain Standard Time, an hour ahead of Central Standard Time, and the same time zone as Eastern Standard Time.

When the United States is on Daylight Savings Time, Peru is two hours ahead of Pacific Daylight Savings Time, one hour ahead of Mountain Daylight Savings Time, the same time zone as Central Daylight Savings Time, and an hour behind Eastern Daylight Savings Time

Restrooms

Western-style flush toilets are the norm in most places. But toilet paper usually goes in the wastebasket not down the toilet.

Weights & Measures

Peru officially uses the metric system. In some areas, you will find pounds and gallons used as well.

Travel

International Travel

There are several major airports located throughout Peru. Most Maranatha projects will require people to arrive into the Jorge Chavez International Airport, located in Lima (airport code LIM), the C.F. Secada Airport in Iquitos (airport code IQT), or the Alfredo Rodriguez Ballon International Airport in Arequipa (airport code AQP).

Most Maranatha projects will require you to book a flight into one of these three airports or into a smaller local airport closer to the project location, if one exists. A variety of direct flights connect to the airports through hubs in the U.S. and Central/South America. Popular airline carriers include American, United, Delta, Copa, LATAM, and Avianca.

When booking your flights, we recommend that you try to book on one itinerary all the way to the final destination to take advantage of the international baggage allowances. Individual domestic flights tend to have stricter limits for baggage weight and size.

Entry and Exit Requirements

The information provided below is for U.S. and Canadian citizens. Citizens of other countries should consult the Peruvian embassy or consulate in your home country for entrance requirements.

Passport | All U.S. and Canadian citizens must present a passport valid for at least six months from your scheduled return date. If you do not have a passport, U.S. citizens can apply at any U.S. post office or online at <http://travel.state.gov>. Canadian citizens can apply online at www.passport.gc.ca. It can take up to two months to complete the entire process; plan accordingly to give yourself enough time to receive your passport. You can expedite the process for an additional fee. Passport photos can be taken at the post office, FedEx, Costco, or Walgreens.

There is no visa requirement for U.S. and Canadian citizens for trips with a duration of less than 90 days. Travelers may be required to show proof of departure from Peru in order to pass through immigration.

For additional information regarding U.S. entrance procedures in Peru visit: <http://travel.state.gov/>

Immigration and Customs Process

On the airplane to Peru, you will receive forms that need to be filled out for processing at the airport. The immigration card will ask for information such as your name (use the name on your passport), passport number, flight number, and address where you will be staying in Peru. Be sure to consult your project packet or your group leader for this address, prior to departure. You will also receive a customs form requiring much of the same information.

After you exit the plane, you will follow the signs to Immigration (Migracion). You will need to present your entrance form(s) and passport. They may ask you a couple questions regarding your trip to Peru. Make sure you say that you are a tourist. If you say you are coming to “work” on a Maranatha trip, it can cause confusion; they may require a work or business visa for your travel in the country. At immigration, they may stamp your passport or give you a slip of paper. Make sure you keep whatever they give you with your passport for the duration of your time in Peru.

After passing through immigration, head to the baggage claim, gather your bags, and go through customs. They may put your bags through an x-ray, do a randomly selected bag check, or manually search your bag. Don't worry about this process as they are primarily looking for fruits, vegetables, animals, weapons, and drugs. After passing through customs, proceed to the arrivals area of the airport where you can meet up with the rest of the group or continue to your domestic flight.

In-Country Transportation in Peru

Maranatha coordinates transportation for open team projects in privately rented vehicles with drivers. If you are leading a group project with Maranatha, we can help your group reserve a private bus for your transportation needs.

Many international rental companies have a presence in Peru. You can reserve and pick up rental cars, trucks, and vans at most airports through agencies such as Avis, Expedia, Budget, Hertz, and Alamo.

The roads around major cities are usually good but take care with merging traffic and watch for potholes. Before driving, familiarize yourself with local laws and traffic norms. Roads between smaller towns are not usually paved. It is not recommended to drive at night.

Taxis in Peru are relatively cheap, but some can be unreliable and unsafe. We recommend that when traveling by taxi in large cities, you look for “tourist taxis” outside hotels and the airport. They can be a little more expensive, but they will respect international driving standards better. Many taxis do not have meters; instead they usually have a preset fare to your destination. Make sure you agree on the fare before entering the taxi and request that the driver not pick up additional passengers during the trip.

Traveling with Minors

Minors under the age of 18 are welcome to join projects to Peru. Maranatha requires that at least one adult travel with every four minors, ages 14-17, and that an adult travel with every minor, age 13 and under. Minors traveling without both parents or legal guardians must carry a notarized consent form. You can find this form and complete instructions on the Maranatha website, under Resources.

Health, Safety, and Security

For more detailed health guidelines for international travel, see our first-time traveler's guide.

Vaccines

Maranatha requires that every volunteer have a current tetanus vaccine (within the last 10 years). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends being up-to-date on routine vaccines and also recommends vaccines for typhoid and hepatitis A. For certain destinations below 7,500 feet elevation, the CDC also recommends the yellow fever vaccine as well as a malaria preventative vaccine other than Chloroquine.

You may already have some of these vaccinations, and they may still be good for this trip. Others you may deem unnecessary for this trip. Maranatha recommends that you schedule a consultation with your physician or a travel clinic to discuss the medical risks in Peru and the ways to minimize them.

Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes and other flying insects can carry a variety of other diseases such as dengue and Zika. Personal precautions are strongly recommended to lower the risk of being bitten. Bring a bug repellent with a 30%-50% concentration of DEET. Wear long sleeves, long pants, and closed-toe footwear when possible. Avoid areas of standing water, and do not spend a lot of time outside during dusk and dawn.

Altitude Sickness

Many parts of southeastern Peru are located in the Andes mountain range, at very high elevations. Cusco is located at over 11,000 feet. This high elevation puts those visiting these parts of the country at risk for altitude sickness. Altitude sickness is a medical condition with symptoms ranging from a mild headache, dizziness, shortness of breath, and nausea to very serious cerebral or pulmonary edema. Rapid onset of symptoms, worsening symptoms, or symptoms persisting more than 48 hours could require evacuation to a lower elevation.

Altitude sickness can occur when ascending too fast and not allowing time to acclimatize to the elevation. Also, those with preexisting conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, or cardiac or lung disease should receive special clearance from their doctor or avoid traveling to high elevations during the project.

Some Maranatha projects will take place in high-altitude regions. Due to the potential risks, each participant on Maranatha projects in Peru is required to return a signed consent form prior to your departure (depending on the exact project location).

Preventative Health

In general, preventative measures are the best ways to avoid becoming ill during your time in Peru. Food should be properly washed and cooked. Use only purified water for drinking and brushing your teeth, and avoid ice cubes at restaurants. Wash your hands regularly. Wear sunscreen and mosquito repellent while outdoors.

Medical Care in Country

Most cities in Peru have modern clinics and hospitals. In general, private clinics are safer and cleaner than public hospitals. Maranatha will have identified several medical care locations, near the project sites, that we believe are safe for our volunteers. If you are leading a group to Peru, be sure to ask our project support coordinator to show you the clinic location closest to your housing and work sites.



Yellow Fever in Peru



Malaria in Peru

Travel Safety

Maranatha will not knowingly send volunteers to an area that is of elevated risk. We consistently monitor security alerts from the areas where we are working, and we consciously avoid high-risk regions. However, it is important for you to take responsibility for your own personal safety while traveling. Here are some ways you can start. For a more detailed list of tips and Maranatha insurance information, be sure to read our [International Traveler's Guide](#). While we do take precautions, there is nothing we can do to guarantee safety. We can only place our trust in God's hands.

- Avoid traveling at night or alone.
- Dress conservatively and keep a low profile.
- Avoid marginal areas of cities, alleyways, and crowds of people.
- Use caution if you are approached on the street by strangers, including vendors.
- Leave valuables, both expensive and sentimental, at home.
- Don't leave your personal belongings unattended, especially in open sight. Consider using a money belt or concealed pouch for passports, credit cards, and cash. Keep your purse or bag in front of you, held with a tight grip.
- [US Department of State](#): Register your travel with the U.S. Department of State by enrolling with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. The U.S. government will then contact you in case of an emergency, natural disaster, or civil unrest. They can also be a point of contact for family emergencies. You can also check for security updates prior to your departure

Maranatha Insurance

Maranatha mission projects are construction projects where people can get hurt. It is not possible for Maranatha to analyze everyone's insurance policy to see whether it is current and the coverage is in effect at the location of the mission project. For that reason, all volunteers will be covered by short-term medical, accident, and travel insurance, coordinated by Maranatha, from the time they arrive at the project until their departure. For more information about project insurance available at www.maranatha.org/insurance

Communication

Promoting Your Maranatha Trip

You may contact Maranatha's marketing department for materials to help you promote your trip to Peru. There are DVDs and printed materials available for your convenience. Contact Maranatha for more details. Also, when discussing this mission trip with your team and while promoting it to your church or school, please be sure to mention that you are partnering with Maranatha! We hope that you will help to spread the word about our mission to spread the Gospel through construction.

Contact Information

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