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Peru Spanish Language School

Adventure



Relaxation



Culture



Trip Name: Peru Spanish Language School **Trip Code:** PESL **Duration:** From 7 days

Trip Highlights

- Hanging out in Cusco- a backpackers Mecca and the gateway to Machu Picchu
- Learn how to speak Spanish like a pro
- Discover the history of Cusco
- Take your pick of optional cultural activities; you'll be tangoing in no time



Overview

Study Spanish in Peru on this brilliant programme. You can 'aprender español' in record time, with experienced teachers, small classes and lots of opportunities to practise. Activities such as tours of Cusco, cooking lessons, dance classes and parties make it even more fun. This is absolutely the best way to kick off your time in South America with our 4 weeks culture and language experience. It's an exciting way to learn the language, experience the local culture and make new friends.

Destination Info

This fascinating country borders Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile and the Pacific Ocean. Comprised of three distinct regions, the wide Andean mountains in the north, a narrow coastal belt running down the centre, along the Pacific Ocean, and the deep Amazon rainforest in the south. Although the coastal belt is a desert, that is where most of the population lives.

The project is based in beautiful colonial Cusco, 5 minutes from your accommodation. Cusco is the undisputed archaeological capital of all the Americas, as well as the continent's oldest continuously inhabited city. Tourists flock here on a daily basis for its culture, history and because it is the gateway to the infamous Machu Picchu. Please note it takes a few days to get used to the high altitude (Cusco is 11,000 feet above sea level!) –you'll find

yourself short of breath even from leisurely strolls!

Itinerary



Classes are held from Monday to Friday with a total of approximately 18 hours of lessons per week, split into four lessons of 55 minutes per day.

The morning sessions take place from 08:30-10:20 and 10:50-12:40 or you can choose the afternoon sessions from 14:20-16:10 and 16:40-18:30. Your personal timetable will be worked out for you during your orientation.

Though we try to take your preferences into account, please be aware that your timetable will depend on the school's numbers and your level of Spanish.

In your free time organised trips or activities are offered and included in the cost two to three times a week. These include a city tour, cooking class, dance class, parties, videos, lectures, trips to museums and other such activities. For the more intrepid traveller, activities such as horse riding in the Andes can be arranged at an extra cost.

Please note: itineraries and activities are subject to change.



On your first day of the programme (Monday) you will have a full orientation with our on-site staff. They will take you around the city and help to answer any questions you may have. They will run through the following:

- An introduction to Peruvian culture and values
- Your health and safety whilst in Peru
- Money and transportation
- An introduction to the area where you will be living
- Local food and practices
- Areas worth visiting in your free time

They will also introduce you to the school and its facilities. You will then have to sit a short Spanish test to determine your level so that you can be placed in an appropriate class.

Accommodation

Throughout your Spanish language course you will be staying with a typical Peruvian family in homestay accommodation. The host families belong to the Peruvian middle class but please bear in mind, that living standards in Peru may not be the same as what you are used to, so you will need to be flexible in order to fit in with the Peruvian way of life. All families are known by the language school and have been chosen because they are friendly, welcoming and have homes where you will be safe.

Generally there will be one or two students per host family and you can expect a private bedroom and shared bathroom facilities. All families have Western amenities such as showers and flushing toilets. Your laundry will also be done for you about once a week. Staying with a host family will give you a unique and invaluable insight into Peruvian culture.

Some of our homestays are a 20 minute walk to the language school, while others are a 10 to 15 minute bus ride. Either way, all of the host families are conveniently located to ensure you reach class on time!

Programme Services and Facilities

Internet

The language has wireless Internet connection, which you are free to make use of with your own laptop, should you bring one. Otherwise, you will find an Internet café located just a few doors down, and many more throughout Cusco. An hour's connection should only cost (the equivalent of) around 60p/0.81€ per hour.

Telephone

You will find public telephones throughout the city and these usually operate with a phone card, which you can purchase in shops and kiosks. Make sure the phone card you buy allows international calls.

Your mobile phone may or may not work in Peru, depending on your network, and if it does, please be aware that in many areas you may not always get a signal. We recommend purchasing a Real Gap worldwide SIM before prior to departure, to enable you to call and text cheaply. Before you depart, please ensure that your mobile is set up with international roaming and is unlocked.

The international dialling code for Peru is +51. To place an outgoing, direct dialled international call, dial +44 for the UK followed by the telephone number. For example to call Real Gap dial +44 1892 516164.

Laundry

Your host family will provide a washing service for you once a week.

Meals

You will be given three meals a day (lunch is the main meal of the day, dinner is usually a light snack).

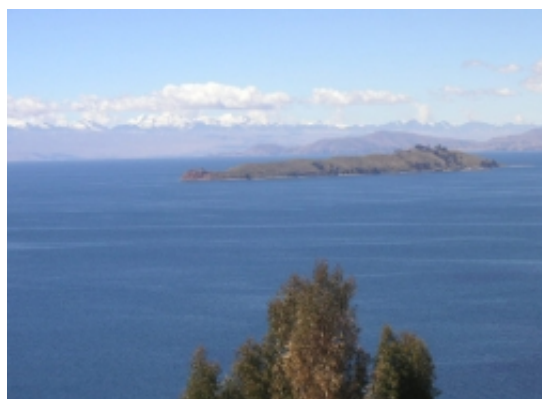
What's Included

- Four hours per day Spanish classes
- Private bedroom with host family
- Three meals per day
- Laundry service
- Airport pick-up in Cusco
- Full orientation
- Extra activities
- 24-hour emergency assistance



What's Not Included

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Extra snacks and alcoholic beverages



Is This Trip For You?

You may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. However, you will still have the full support of your in-country team and those at the project. If you are looking for a group volunteering experience we have plenty of options for you to consider.

What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore you may not need all of the listed items on your travels.

Personal Admin

- Passport, insurance certificates and personal documentation
- Photocopies of all the above to be left at home with your next of kin
- Spending money
- Cash for airport departure tax
- Proof of inoculations (please speak to your GP about necessary immunisations)
- Guidebook on country – recommended Lonely Planet or Footprints

General

- Camera / Film / Batteries and charger
- Plug adaptor
- Notebooks and pens, diary
- Torch / Extra Batteries
- Sunglasses
- Pocket-knife (comes in handy for general use – please pack in your hold luggage as otherwise it will be confiscated!)
- Water bottle – at least one litre
- Day pack/rucksack for everyday use
- A three-season Sleeping bag (especially useful when on weekend excursions)
- Mosquito Net (if required)
- Personal enjoyment - books, cards, music, etc.
- Personal hygiene items (deodorant, soap, shampoo, toothbrush etc)
- Spanish dictionary, verb book etc

Clothing

- Hat
- Comfortable walking shoes
- A pair of thick socks for walking
- Sandals
- Waterproof Jacket
- Fleece/pullover (for cool evenings)
- Long trousers
- Warmer clothing for winter
- Swimwear
- Towel (quick-drying preferably)

Medical Kit

- Personal Hygiene Kit (ex. Antihistamines, Anti-diarrhoea tablets, headache tablets)
- Personal Toiletries
- Sunscreen
- Mosquito and insect repellent

Minimum Age

Minimum age 17 years with parental consent, maximum decided on health and fitness of participant.

Minimum Numbers

There are no minimum numbers on the trip.

Please note: you may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact us

Flights

If you have added the Lima arrival package to your booking, you should arrange your flight to Peru to arrive at Lima Airport on Saturday (shown as your programme start date). If you are making your own arrangements to arrive in Cusco, you should arrange to arrive at Cusco airport on Sunday (your programme start date). Your return flight from Lima should not be arranged for any earlier than 5pm on your programme end date.

To book your flights, please contact your travel advisor who will do their best to get you the best deal on the day. Please provide them with your full name as it is stated in your passport. Before you make the call please make sure you have your required departure dates, return dates and other details you may require.

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your Online account, or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

Please note: If you are flying to Peru via the USA you will need to obtain Travel Authorisation by registering online through the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) no later than 72 hours before departure. This is compulsory and will cost USD\$14 to register. To register, please visit: www.esta.cbp.dhs.gov

FAQs

1. Does the language school run all year round?

Yes

2. How much time do you spend per day at the school?

Classes are held from Monday to Friday with a total of 20 hours of lessons per week, split into eight lessons of 55 minutes per day. Your personal timetable will be worked out for you during your orientation?

3. At the home stay do other volunteers stay at the same accommodation?

There will be one or two students per host family and you can expect a private bedroom and shared bathroom facilities. All families have Western amenities such as showers and flushing toilets.

4. Are there other activities we can do during time off?

The school can help organise trips for many of the attractions around the area.

Police Check

This trip requires a Police Check to be carried out - please contact us for further information on how to do this.



Peru Spanish Language School

Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

Money Matters

The currency in Peru is the Nuevo Sol (PEN, symbol S/.), which is divided into 100 Céntimos. Coins come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20 and 50 Céntimos and 1, 2, and 5 Nuevos Soles. Notes come in 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 Nuevos Soles.

While Peru's close proximity to North America means that US Dollars are widely accepted at most establishments in Lima and some large country towns, it is advisable to have some local currency to pay for transportation or goods at smaller establishments.

Credit cards such as MasterCard and Visa are accepted in Lima and most tourist areas, though use in less commercial areas may be limited. This is also true of ATM machines or 'Cajeros automáticos'. ATMs commonly dispense both US Dollars and Nuevos Soles and usually charge for using international cards.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant \$5.00
Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) \$1.38
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) \$0.67
Water (0.33 litre bottle) \$0.60

(Prices quoted in US Dollar)

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Citizens of the European Union, the USA, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia will be issued a Tourist Visa on entry for stays of up to 90 days. For longer stays and visa information for other nationalities, please consult your nearest Peru Embassy or High Commission.

Cultural Considerations

Greetings

Pleasantries are taken seriously in Peru. It is simply polite to always say “Buenos Días” upon entering a building or when meeting somebody, and to say “con permiso” when leaving or passing someone. You should address people in the polite “usted” form and show additional respect for older people. If you know the person then it is customary to shake hands or kiss in greetings. Any kind of conversation is usually preceded by small talk, and being able to speak at least basic Spanish will go a long way with the locals and demonstrate your keenness to fit in.

Gestures

Many gestures are used in Peru. A common one is the lifting of the chin to indicate "up the street" when giving directions, and the lowering of the chin to indicate "down the street" – a useful one for any traveller! Body language is considered an integral part of daily speech in Peru and, as a foreigner, it may be hard to understand. It is important to remember that as a general rule, Peruvians tend to be physically closer than other cultures and greetings generally involve a lot of body contact.

Saying “no”

A Latino always wants to help you and it's considered impolite to say 'no' or 'I don't know'. Whatever you ask, always expect to get an answer, even if it is not correct. The best thing to do is to ask three different people the same question and if you always get the same answer it's probably right!

Religion

Peru is predominately Roman Catholic. The indigenous population often blends Catholicism with their traditional beliefs. Religion is an important part of life in Peru, and we would urge that you be respectful at all times in and around places of worship. Do not be surprised to see individuals crossing themselves when passing any object of religious significance or reciting religious adages at appropriate times.

Clothing

It is important to remember, especially for female travellers, that the kinds of clothes you feel comfortable wearing

in your own country may not be an acceptable form of dress in Latin America. Short skirts for example, will invite unwanted attention. Just use your common sense and adapt your style in accordance with your surroundings. Often in churches you will be required to cover your shoulders and knees. Cover up for your own safety, and in respect of the local culture and customs.

Peru can have very cold mornings and evenings, but then may get warm during the day. Therefore we advise that you pack a selection of lightweight clothing than can be layered. It is advisable to always carry a jumper or jacket with you. Always bear in mind the activities you will be doing when you are packing, both at the project and socially.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Smoking and drinking is acceptable in Peru and readily available. However, please respect others. Smoking is not permissible in shared rooms or host family homes. Drink in moderation and don't let it impact on your full itinerary. While we want you to have fun in your free time, antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated on the programme.

It is absolutely forbidden to bring drugs into Peru. Always keep an eye on your luggage while travelling. Never bring anyone else's luggage through customs. If you get caught there is little chance that you will walk away without punishment. As in most countries, Peru has very strict rules when it comes to the possession of drugs. All drugs, including "soft" drugs like marijuana, are ILLEGAL. Please do NOT use any illegal substances whilst travelling – it is not worth the risk and is not acceptable on the programme.

Tipping

A 10% tip is customary at restaurants and hotels and is usually included in the bill. Tips are not necessary (but always welcome) in small restaurants or for taxis. Hairdressers expect 20% and a couple of dollars is normal for airport/railway porters.

Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

Safety

Unfortunately, tourists are often targets for pickpockets and thieves. Please educate yourself about South America and Peru in particular, before you leave, so that you can be alert to all types of situations. Safety guidelines will be covered in detail at your orientation session upon arrival but please familiarise yourself with the following general travel safety rules.

- Avoid travelling alone, especially at night
- Find out where the unsafe areas are and avoid them
- When travelling keep all-important documents and valuables in a safe place, like an inner hidden pocket or

money belt

- Carry only as much cash as you think you will need for the day
- Don't wear expensive jewellery or watches
- Be wary of people who seem too friendly too fast
- Keep cameras out of sight. Always keep bags and purses in your sight, especially on public transport.
- Before swimming, ask how safe the area is
- If you wish to travel independently around Peru we advise you to make use of the services of a reputable bus company.

We advise that you check your government's advice before travelling abroad. For UK, American and Australian customers please see the relevant links below;

UK: www.fco.gov.uk

USA: www.travel.state.gov

Australia: www.smartraveller.gov.au

ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing 'traps' in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

For more information on travelling in Peru we suggest you purchase a Lonely Planet or Rough Guide.

Language Guide

Both Spanish and Quechua are the official languages of Peru. Many indigenous dialects, such as Aymara, are also spoken. Here are a few basic Spanish phrases that should help you get by during your trip. We also suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

Hello - *Hola!*

Good day - *Buenas dias!*

How are you? - *Como estas? ('Como estas usted?' if you need to be extra formal!)*

Goodbye - *Adios*

Please - *Por favour*

Thank you - *Gracias*

I don't understand - *No entiendo*

I don't speak Spanish - *No hablo espanol*

Sorry/excuse me - *Lo siento*

Where is...? - *Donde esta...?*

The bill please - *La cuenta por favor*

Food & Drink

As with many countries in Latin America, lunch is the main meal of the day in Peru. Be aware that tax and service charge is added to the bill at restaurants. Here are some of the typical dishes you will no doubt come across during

your travels.

- Fritos - fried pork or “chancho”
- Cancau - tripe, potatoes, peppers, parsley served with rice
- Ceviche - raw fish, shrimp etc. marinated in lemon with onions, red peppers
- Parinada - popular bouillabaisse with yuyo de mar (a tangy seaweed)
- Anticuchos - hearts of beef with garlic, peppers, cumin, vinegar on a skewer served with a potato at the top
- Á la Huancaína - sauce made with eggs, milk, cheese, served with a meat or potato dish
- Carne en adobo - cut and seasoned steak
- Ollucos con charqui - A kind of potato with dried meat
- Caus and Carapulca - potato dishes
- Chupe de camarones - shrimp stew
- Desserts:
- Mana - almond paste
- Tejas - sugar candies
- Turrón - the Lima nougat
- Pastelillos - yucas with sweet potatoes, sugar and anise. Fried, powdered with sugar and served hot.
- Manja blanco - milk, sugar, eggs
- Mazamorra morada - deep purple pudding, made of purple corn with lemon, dried fruits, cinnamon, cloves
- Common fruits are also eaten a lot for dessert - bananas, citrus fruits, avocado, papaya, mango, passion fruit.

Drinks

If you like beer, the Cusco and Arequipa brands are probably the best. Cristal and Pilsner are good too. Remember the alcohol content of Peruvian beer is twice as high as standard beers!

Pisco sour is a drink made from the national grape brandy, lemon juice, sugar, egg white, nutmeg - this is a potent mixture!

Other common drinks include:

- Guinda - sweet cherry brandy
- Aguardiente - sugar cane alcohol
- Chicha de jora - corn beer (usually homemade)
- Chicha morada - softdrink made with purple maize.
- Some of the local wines are OK - i.e. the Inca wines Tacama and Ocucaje.

Public Holidays

To view a list of the public holidays for Vietnam, please see the link below:

<http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/peru/>

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. Many schools, government offices, stores and banks are closed on National Holidays. Please note that there may be slight date variations for some of the holidays each year and that the list is not exhaustive. The Peruvian Government have been known to introduce new bank holidays or commemorative days at short notice.

Weather

Peru's climate has two main seasons; wet and dry, though weather depends greatly on the geographical region. The country's climatic zones can be roughly divided into the tropical Amazon in the east, the dry coastal desert of the west and the Andean mountains in the centre, where temperatures can dip below freezing! The rainforest is unsurprisingly the wettest and most humid area with the drier months between June and September. The best time to visit the mountains is in the dry season between June and August while the coast rarely sees any rain, getting particularly hot between December and March.

Time

Five hours behind GMT (January to April, four hours behind GMT due to daylight saving).

Electricity

In Peru the electric system is 220 Volts and frequency 60 Hertz. If your device does not accept this voltage you will need to bring an adapter.

Outlets in Peru generally accept 2 types of plug:



Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of recommended travel advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

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