

# Peru

**Capital:** Lima

**Religion:** Roman Catholicism is the official religion in Peru. Catholics constitute about 85 % of the population. 11% of the Peruvian society is Evangelical. 4% of the population is comprised of Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and the Israelites of the New Universal Pact and the Mormons. Other minority religions include the Baha'i Faith, Judaism and the Islam

**Government:** A democratic republic is divided into 25 regions. The President is the head of State and Government and is elected for a period of five years. The President designates the Prime Minister who advises the President in the election of the Council of Ministries. The Congress is made up of 130 members.

**Ethnic Groups:** 45 % of the inhabitants are Amerindians, 37 % mestizo (of Spanish and Amerindian ancestry), 15 % white, and 3 % black, Asian or other races.

**Language:** Spanish is the national language, although many Peruvians speak Quechua or other native languages mainly in the cities located in the highlands.

**Currency:** The unit of currency in Peru is Nuevo Sol (PEN).

- Located in western South America, the country borders Ecuador and Colombia to the north, Brazil to the east, Bolivia to the southeast, Chile to the south and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The country is divided into three regions. The *Costa* (coast), to the west, is a tight plain, largely dry, crossed by seasonal rivers. The *sierra* (highlands) is the region of the Andes including the *Altiplano* plateau. The third region is the *selva* (jungle), a flat area covered by the Amazon rainforest that extends to the east. Almost 60% of the country's area is located within this region.
- Industrial and urban development is concentrated mainly in the capital, Lima and inhabited by 8 million people. Other major cities include Arequipa, Trujillo, Chiclayo, Piura, Iquitos, Cusco, Chicbote and Huancayo.
- The origins of the Peruvian society can be traced back to ancient cultures starting from the Norte Chico Civilization, one of the oldest in the world, to the Inca Empire. The Spanish Empire conquered the region in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and established a Viceroyalty, which included most of its South American colonies.



- The country's economic performance has been linked to export, mainly copper, gold, zinc, fishmeal and textiles. Its main trading partners are the United States, China, Brazil and Chile. Another important industry sector is construction.
- Peru is organized into three different social classes. The upper class is a minority mainly found in Lima and comprises 3 % of the total population. The middle class is made up of workers and professionals that depend on a salary. It comprises 60 % of the total population. The workers and the peasants form the lower class, most live in the pueblo jovenes or shantytowns. The peasant's main activity is agriculture.

## Business and Social Etiquette

- Be prepared to start your meetings later than the agreed hour. Some Peruvians take time in a flexible manner and arrive late. Some people arrive at the "Hora Peruana", Peruvian time. It would be a good suggestion to allow more time for a business meeting. However, as a visitor, always try to arrive on time
- Peruvians put a great emphasis on relationship building. They try to get to know their counterparts before making any deals. Peruvians will usually take you to a restaurant to eat Peruvian food and get to know you better. Peruvians are very proud of their cuisine. Some food is spicy, so be sure to ask how spicy a specific dish is.
- It is important to arrange meetings with the top executives, because the decisions are made at the top. Take into consideration that many companies follow a hierarchy.
- Personal contacts and networks are very important when you want to do business in Peru. If you start a friendship with an executive, he or she might be able to share his or her connections, which will enable you to generate more business. They will tell you that they know another person that can help you in order to close a deal. Therefore, it is important to create friendships with the Peruvian executives.
- Meetings should be arranged and confirmed. You should try to avoid meetings during the months of January and March because it is the summer season. Executives usually work until 12 o'clock on Fridays, because many companies establish the "Horario de Verano", or summer schedule and work shorter periods of time.
- Business cards should be formally presented at every new introduction after the handshake. It is best to have one side in English and the reverse side in Spanish. A handshake is the standard greeting. When a relationship has been established, expect a hug or, if you are a woman, expect a kiss on the cheek.
- Males usually wear suits and ties. Women usually wear suits or dresses.



- Business is conducted formally and it may require several meetings in order to close a deal. Peruvians like to build relationships before negotiating an agreement. It is vital for you to take time to get to know them very well.
- It is important to use “Señor” or “Señora” followed by the father’s last name during the initial meetings. Later, they will invite you to use their first names. It creates a closer relationship.
- There is a possibility that they might ask information about your family. Peruvians try, in many cases, to link their professional lives with their private lives.
- Today, the majority of executives speak English. However, it would be a great idea if you could speak some Spanish. It is considered a nice gesture if you try to speak the language.
- Many people from Latin American countries, including Peruvians, like physical proximity.



## Language

- Always use “Señor”, “Señora”, Mr., Mrs. or Miss unless otherwise invited.

English	Spanish	Phonetics
Hello	Hola	O-la
Good morning	Buenos días	Boo-ai-nos-di-as
Good evening	Buenas tardes	Boo-ai-nas tar-dais
Good bye	Adios	A -dee-os
Yes	Sí	See
No	No	Nou
Please	Por favor	Por-fa-vour
Thank you	Gracias	Gra-see-as
You're welcome	De nada	Dai-na-da
I don't understand	No entiendo	No-en-tee-en- dou

