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PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions
to help you put together your perfect trip

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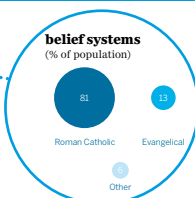
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UNDERSTAND PERU

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you
can make sense of what you see

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Luke Waterson

➤ Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favorite places are listed first

➤ Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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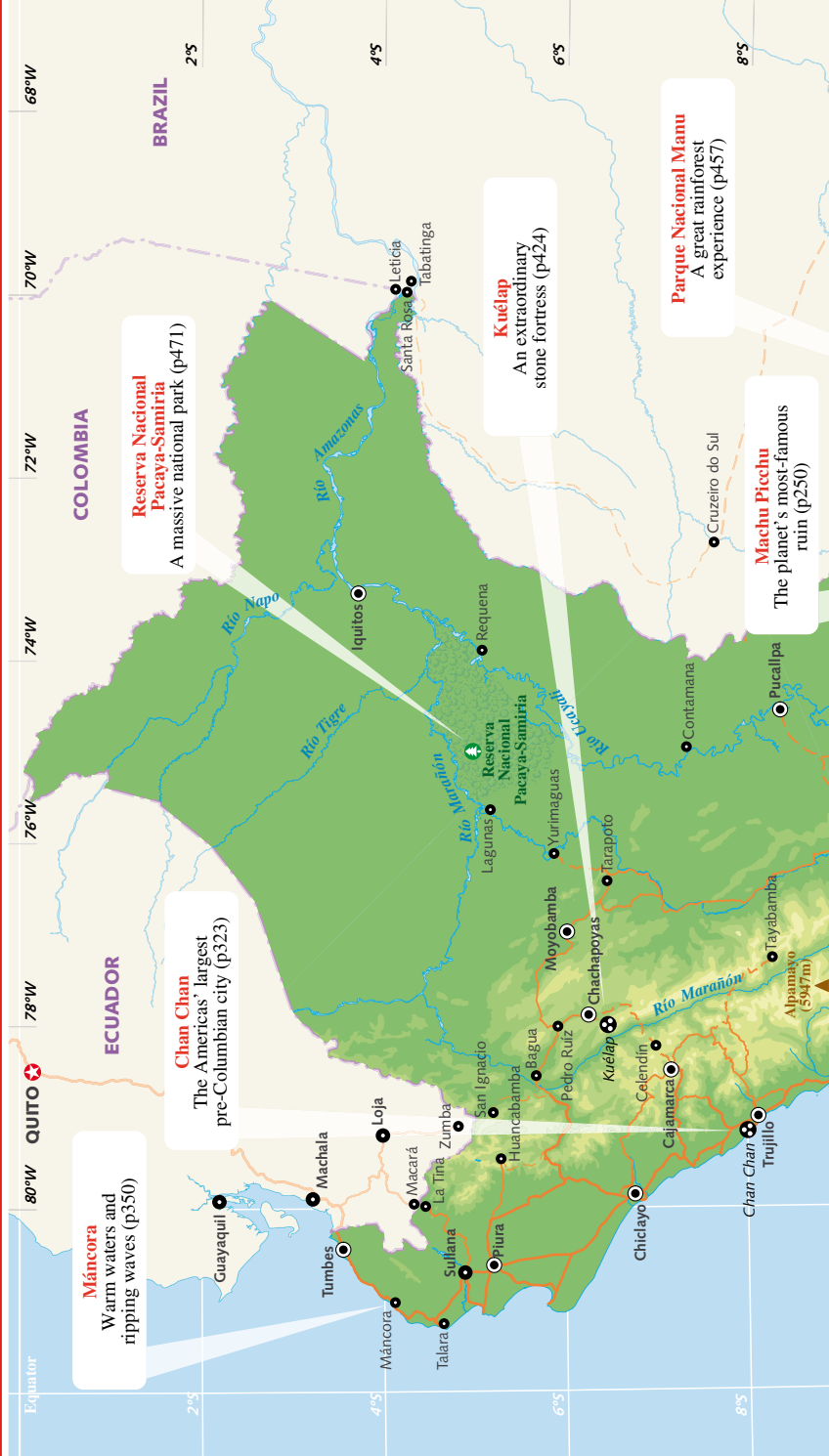
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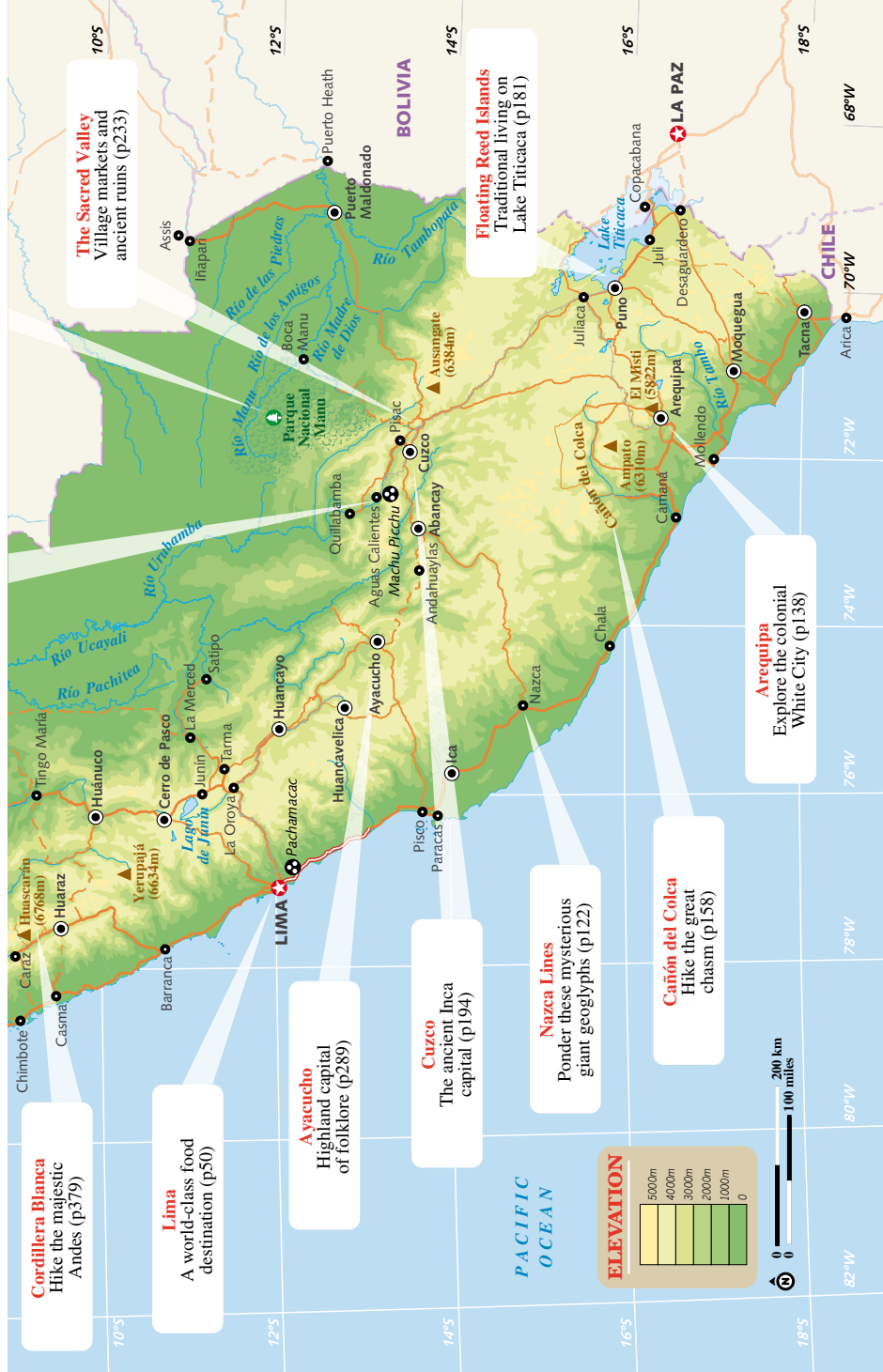
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OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



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Coordinating author; Lima, Lake Titicaca, Cusco & the Sacred Valley

Author Carolyn McCarthy first discovered *cumbia* camping on the Inca Trail many years ago. For this trip, she sampled hundreds of Peruvian delicacies, climbed Wayna Picchu and visited one medical clinic. Some of her other Lonely Planet titles include *Argentina*, *Panama*, *Yellowstone & Grand Teton National Parks*, *USA*, *The Travel Book*, *Best in Travel* and *Trekking in the Patagonian Andes*. She

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Understand Peru The daughter of a Peruvian father, Carolina has spent her life making pilgrimages to Peru to eat ceviche and sip pisco sours. An avid student of Peruvian history (she has a degree in Latin American Studies), she has read Mario Vargas Llosa novels in Spanish, danced to Peruvian waltzes and spent countless hours studying the arts and textiles of the Andes. She also makes a mean *aji de gallina*. Find her at C-Monster.net or on Twitter at [@cmonstah](https://twitter.com/cmonstah).

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lonelyplanet.com/members/carolinamiranda



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North Coast, Huaraz & the Cordilleras, Northern Highlands Kevin Raub grew up in Atlanta and started his career as a music journalist in New York, working for *Men's Journal* and *Rolling Stone* magazines. He ditched the rock 'n' roll lifestyle for travel writing and moved to Brazil. Working on *Peru* he logged over 2500km in his beige Renault tank, canvassing up and down the North Coast. He even stood his ground on a shakedown from *Policía Nacional* on one of the nine times they stopped him. After that, he opted for buses in the Northern Highlands and Huaraz areas. This is Kevin's 20th Lonely Planet guide. You can find him at www.kevinraub.net.

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lonelyplanet.com/members/kraub

OVER MORE
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Best-selling guide to Peru – source: Nielsen BookScan, Australia, UK and USA, September 2011 to August 2012.

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[South Coast, Arequipa & Canyon Country](#) An expat-Brit now living in Vancouver, Canada, Brendan first visited Peru as part of an epic South American traveling odyssey in the early 2000s; a trip that involved getting hailed on in Machu Picchu, getting lost in the middle of the Bolivian salt pans, and teaching local Uruguayans how to do the 'Madness dance' in Punta del Este. He has since covered numerous Spanish-speaking countries for Lonely Planet including Cuba, Mexico,

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**Luke Waterson**

[Central Highlands, Amazon Basin](#) Two near-death experiences (including almost drowning in Río Madre de Dios) made for a poignant sixth trip to Peru for Luke. He's been traveling (hiking/hitching/boating on vessels of dubious quality) across the country since 2004. His writing about close encounters with bizarreness in Latin America, Cuba and central Europe has graced several publications, including 15 Lonely Planet guidebooks and the UK magazine, *Real Travel*, which

he helped relaunch. This is the second time he's worked on *Peru*. Tweet him (@lukewaterson1) for anything South/Central America-related.

itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travelers.



Two to Four Weeks The Gringo Trail

This trip hits some of the pre-eminent highlights of the continent. Leaving **Lima**, journey south to **Pisco** and **Paracas**, where you can boat to the wildlife-rich **Islas Ballestas**. Then it's on to **Ica**, Peru's wine and pisco capital, and the palm-fringed, dune-lined oasis of **Huacachina**, famous for sandboarding. Next is **Nazca** for a flight over the mysterious Nazca Lines.

Turn inland for the 'White City' of **Arequipa**, with its colonial architecture and stylish nightlife. Lace up your boots to trek the incredible **Cañón del Colca** or **Cañón del Cotahuasi** – perhaps the world's deepest – or climb **El Misti**, a postcard-perfect 5822m volcano. Continue upwards to **Puno**, Peru's port on **Lake Titicaca**, one of the world's highest navigable lakes. From here you can boat to traditional islands and explore the strange *chullpas* (ancient funerary towers) at **Sillustani** and **Cutimbo**.

Wind through the Andes to **Cuzco**, South America's oldest continuously inhabited city. Browse colorful markets and explore archaeological sites in the **Sacred Valley**, then trek to **Machu Picchu** via an adventurous alternative route.



Four Weeks The Best of Peru

If you're set on getting a taste of everything, this whirlwind tour hits Peru's top must-see attractions. Give yourself a full month to fully take it all in.

Conquer your jet lag by becoming acquainted with the exquisite tastes of Peru in the restaurants of **Lima**, strolling parks and museums between meals. Head south through the coastal desert for a flyover of the **Nazca Lines** before arriving in stylish, cosmopolitan **Arequipa**, with its mysterious monasteries, deep canyons and smoking volcanoes.

Fly high into the Andes to reach the ancient Inca capital of **Cuzco** for a few days of acclimatization, exploring the cobblestone city and visiting **Sacred Valley** villages to check out colorful markets selling textiles, talismans and dozens of types of tubers. Then board the train to **Machu Picchu**, the most visited archaeological site in South America.

From Cuzco, fly to **Puerto Maldonado** (or brave the 10-hour bus ride) where you can kick back at a wildlife lodge along one of the mighty rivers of the Amazon Basin. Alternatively, you can take an overland tour from Cuzco to the **Manu area**, with remote tracts of virgin forest holding diverse animals from kinkajous to caimans, it's one of the most biodiverse areas of the planet. Another option for exploring the Amazonian *selva* (jungle) is to first fly back to Lima, then onward to **Iquitos**, a bustling port that will launch you deeper into the jungle.

Back in Lima, take a bus or fly north to the adventurers' base camp of **Huaraz**, where a short trek will take you to the precipitous peaks of the **Cordillera Blanca**. A day trip to Chavin de Huántar will lead you to one of Peru's oldest ancient sites. Rumble back down to the coast at **Chimbote**, then dash north to historic **Trujillo**, which offers spicy northern dishes, surrounded by a cornucopia of archaeological sites. These include the ruins of the largest pre-Columbian city in the Americas, Chan Chan, and the fascinating Huacas del Sol y de la Luna. Finish up the journey by taking a seaside break at the bustling surf town of **Máncora**.



AXEL FASSIO/GETTY IMAGES®

- » (above) A traditional boat made from totora reeds on Lake Titicaca (p167)
- » (left) Inca burial *chulpas* (funerary towers) in Cutimbo (p179)



Two Weeks Plus The Inca Heartland

From Lima, fly to Cuzco but move on to the lower **Sacred Valley** to spend your first three to four days acclimating to the altitude. Visit the bustling market of **Pisac**, see the ruins and ride horses at **Moray** and **Maras**. The best accommodations are in the quaint Inca village of **Ollantaytambo**, at a swank valley resort or area B&B.

From Ollantaytambo, hike the town ruins in the morning or visit the cool salt pans of **Salinas** and take an afternoon train to **Aguas Calientes**. Enjoy a leisurely dinner and tuck in early to take the first bus to the great Inca citadel of **Machupicchu**. Spend the day browsing the ruins.

The following morning, hop the train to **Cuzco**. Now that you're acclimated, spend a few days enjoying the colonial charms of this former Inca capital, taking a walking tour, visiting a few museums, admiring the splendors of **Qorikancha**, the Inca's most spectacular temple, and enjoying the city's outstanding cuisine.

Grab a comfortable tourist bus (or take the historic train) to the altiplano city of **Puno**. If you can coincide with a festival, this is the place to do it, with wild costumes, brass bands and fervent merriment. Otherwise, take in folkloric music at a dinner show or adventure to aquatic accommodations on the retired steamship *Yavari*.

From your base in Puno, the funerary towers of the Colla, Lupaca and Inca cultures can be found at **Sillustani** and **Cutimbo**, an easy day trip, and worth combining with lovely **Lampa** and its historic church. Take a boat tour of **Lake Titicaca**, visiting the famous reed islands and staying overnight in traditional family lodgings on **Isla Amantani**. If you have a few extra days, take a catamaran tour, which also visits the Bolivian islands of **Isla del Sol** and **Isla de la Luna**, landing you in **Copacabana**, from where you can take a tourist bus back to Puno.

Returning to Puno, explore the rural coast of the **Capachica Peninsula**, home to places still steeped in the ancient traditions of the altiplano with nary another traveler in sight.

Get ready for the culture shock of big city living, and fly back to Lima.



Two to Four Weeks Exploring Amazonia

More than half of Peru is jungle, populated by spectacular wildlife and tribal peoples. Go overland and drop dramatically away from the eastern slopes of the Andes to slip deep into the Amazon Basin, which stretches all the way to the Atlantic. This entire itinerary takes a month, or it can be divided by region into one- or two-week segments.

The most popular excursion starts from **Cuzco** and heads to the **Manu area**, itself the size of a small country, albeit one with kingdoms of jungle lodges. Another option is to fly from Cuzco to **Puerto Maldonado** and kick back in a thatch-roofed bungalow with a view, either along the **Río Madre de Dios**, the gateway to lovely **Lago Sandoval**, or along the **Río Tambopata**, where a national reserve protects one of the country's largest clay licks. The dry season (July and August) is traditionally the best time to return overland back to Cuzco, although the recent paving of this route means it's possible outside these months.

Or turn your focus to the north. The easiest way to get there is to fly from Lima to **Pucallpa**, staying in a lodge or bungalow in the nearby **Yarinacocha**. The lovely oxbow lake is ringed by tribal villages. You can visit some of these, including those of the matriarchal Shipibo people, renowned for their pottery. Hardcore overland travelers can opt to reach Pucallpa from Lima via the coffee-growing settlement of **San Ramón** and the miniscule village of **Puerto Bermúdez**, the stronghold of Peru's largest Amazon tribe, the Asháninka.

From Pucallpa, begin the classic slow riverboat journey north along the **Río Ucayali** to **Iquitos**, the world's largest city with no road access! This northern jungle capital has a floating market and a bustling port, where you can catch a more comfortable cruise into Peru's largest national park, **Reserva Nacional Pacaya-Samiria**, via **Lagunas**. It's also tempting to float over into Brazil via the unique **tri-border zone**.

It's best to fly if your time is limited; if not, lose yourself for weeks on epic river and road journeys through jungle terrain. Bring bucket loads of patience and self-reliance – and a lot of luck never hurts.



10 Days to Two Weeks North Coast

The first stop north of **Lima** could be **Caral**, where the oldest known civilization in South America arose about 5000 years ago. Further north, spy ancient engravings of human sacrifice at **Sechin** and continue to **Trujillo**. Nearby attractions include the Moche pyramids of **Huacas del Sol y de la Luna** and ruins of the once-mighty **Chan Chan**.

Off the sleepy beaches at **Huanchaco**, surfers paddle out to the breakers while local fishers trawl the coast. To the north, the surf spot of **Puerto Chicama** boasts one of the world's longest left-hand breaks. Then it's **Chiclayo**, with world-class museums nearby showcasing riches from the important archaeological site of **Sipán**.

Craft-market hub **Piura** boasts great dining possibilities, while the witch doctors of **Huancabamba** are hidden away in the Andes. Peru's best beaches lie along the Pacific shoreline further north, with resorts such as **Máncora**, where you can feast on fresh seafood and dance the balmy nights away.

The journey ends at **Tumbes**, a gateway to Ecuador and jumping-off point to Peru's endangered mangrove swamps, which teem with wildlife (mind the crocs!).

Two to Four Weeks The Wild & Ancient North

From **Lima**, head to **Trujillo**, sampling the fiery coastal cuisine and exploring nearby ruins at **Chan Chan** and **Huacas del Sol y de la Luna**. Head further north to spy ancient ruins and the witches' market of **Chiclayo**.

From here, brave the wild route to the lovely highland town of **Cajamarca**, where the conquistadors captured Inca Atahualpa. In the dry season, adventure on the slow, spectacular route to friendly **Celendín** and on to **Leimebamba** to see the Marvelous Spatuletail Hummingbird. Continue on to **Chachapoyas** where the cloud forest obscures the fantastic monolithic fortress of **Kuélap**.

From Chachapoyas, journey via **Pedro Ruiz** to **Tarapoto**, where you can hike in lush forest to waterfalls. Next, fly to the jungle city of **Iquitos** or continue via **Yurimaguas**, where cargo boats make the rugged two-day trip to Iquitos via the village of **Lagunas**, the entry point to the **Reserva Nacional Pacaya-Samiria**, for an unforgettable glimpse of the world's greatest river basin. At Iquitos, you can arrange boat trips that go deeper into the rainforest and on to Brazil or Colombia.

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