AN INTRODUCTION TO PERU
The Republic of Peru, (Spanish: República del Perú), or Peru, is a country in western South America, bordering Ecuador, Colombia to the north, Brazil to the east, Bolivia to the south-east and south, Chile to the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Peru is rich in cultural anthropology, and is well-known as the cradle of the Inca empire.
# AN INTRODUCTION TO PERU

## PERU

- Perú
- History
- Regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amazonas</td>
<td>1011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancash</td>
<td>1213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apurímac</td>
<td>1415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arequipa</td>
<td>1617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayacucho</td>
<td>1819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cajamarca</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callao</td>
<td>2223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cusco</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cusco</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huancavelica</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huánuco</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ica</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Junín</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Libertad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambayeque</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lima</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Loreto</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madre de Dios</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Moquegua</td>
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<td>Pasco</td>
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<tr>
<td>Piura</td>
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</table>

- Regions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puno</td>
<td>2526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Martín</td>
<td>2728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacna</td>
<td>2930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumbes</td>
<td>3132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ucayali</td>
<td>3334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Geography
- Politics
- Economy
- Demographics
- Language
- Art and Culture
- Art and Culture
- Folklore and Music
- Folklore and Music
- Sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AN INTRODUCTION TO PERU

REGIONS

Peru's territory is divided successively into 25 regions (Spanish: regiones; singular: región), 180 provinces and 1747 districts. The Lima Province, located in the central coast of the country, is unique in that it doesn't belong to any of the twenty-five regions. The city of Lima is located in this province, which is also known as Lima Metropolitana (Metropolitan Lima). Until 2002, Peru was divided into 24 departments (departamentos) plus one constitutional province (Callao), and many people still use this term when referring to today's regions, although it is now obsolete.

Current Peruvian regions are:

Amazonas
Is a region in northern Peru. It is bordered by Ecuador on the north and west, the Cajamarca Region on the west, the La Libertad Region on the south and the Loreto and San Martín regions on the east. Its capital is the city of Chachapoyas. The Amazonas region is made up of rainforest and Sierra (highlands), although the rainforest area is larger and extends northwards up to the border with Ecuador in the top of the Cordillera del Cóndor. The Sierra is located in the region's southern provinces and covers only one-fourth of its area.

The large and deep Marañón Valley, which constitutes another important morphological characteristic of this region, crosses a large part of its territory and expands from south to north getting its major amplitude in the zone of Bagua and then getting narrow after passing the Eastern Cordillera in its way to the Low Jungle, crossing the pongos, which means door in Quechua. The Utcubamba Valley goes longitudinally up to the Marañón River and constitutes the main center of production and human settlement.
Ancash

Is a region located in northern Peru. It is bordered by the La Libertad Region on the north, the Huánuco and Pasco regions on the east, the Lima Region on the south, and the Pacific Ocean on the west. Its capital is the city of Huaraz and its largest city and port is Chimbote. The name of the region originates from the Quechua word “anqash”, which means blue. The territory of the coast, high plateaus and Andean punas of the Ancash Region are flat, while the rest of its territory, occupied by the Andes, is very rough. In the west, slopes with strong declivity have been shaped in narrow canyons with abrupt and deserted sides. Also in the Pacific slopes, the Santa River has shaped a wide valley in the punas which is getting narrow each time until cut the Cordillera Negra (“black mountain range”) where the majestic Del Pato Canyon has been formed. Most of the Ancash population is concentrated in the Callejón de Huaylas formed by the Blanca and Negra Cordilleras (mountain ranges). Two areas are the most outstanding surfaces in the topography of Ancash: the Cordillera Negra located on the west of the Callejón de Huaylas, which has peaks without glaciers; and the Cordillera Blanca located on the east, which has several peaks covered with snow and ice, such as the Huascarán, which is the highest peak in Peru (6768 m above sea level), and the Alpamayo. Likewise, there are many lagoons that originated from glaciers like Llanganuco and Paron.
AN INTRODUCTION TO PERU

REGIONS

Apurímac
Is a region in central Peru. It is bordered on the east by the Cusco Region, on the west by the Ayacucho Region, and on the south by the Arequipa and Ayacucho regions. The region's name originates from the Quechua language and means "God speaks". The region is divided into 7 provinces, which are composed of 79 districts.
Arequipa
Is a region in southwestern Peru. It is bordered by the Ica, Ayacucho, Apurímac and Cusco regions on the north; the Puno Region on the east; the Moquegua Region on the south; and the Pacific Ocean on the west. Its capital, also called Arequipa, is Peru’s second-largest city. This region has a rough surface which is characterized by heavy layers of volcanic lava covering large areas of its inter-Andean sector. It has deep canyons like the ones formed by the Ocoña and Majes rivers opposed to medium-altitude plateaus such as La Joya, and high-altitude ones such the Arrieros Pampa and those located in the zones of Chivay, Huambo and Pichucolla. Volcanic cones are seen in this area emerging above the plateaus and forming snowfalls, such as Misti, Chachani, Ampato, Mismi, Solimana and Coropuna. In contrast with these heights, there are deep and impressing canyons, including Majes, Colca, Sihuas and Ocoña where important aspects of the ecological evolution of this zone can be clearly observed. In the Coast, small plateaus and dunes represent characteristics of the desert of Arequipa, like the ones located in the Majes, Sihuas and La Joya pampas which are particularly beautiful and developed. From a hydrographic point of view, the rivers draining its territory belong mainly to the Pacific watershed but there are also some rivers belonging to the Amazon hydrographic system. Some of the region’s main rivers are: Ocoña, Yauca, Camana and Quilca. The starting point of the Amazon River, the longest river on Earth, is located in the Arequipa region.
**Regions**

**Ayacucho**  
Is a region of Peru, located in the south-central Andes of the country. Its capital is the city of Ayacucho. The region was one of the hardest hit by terrorism during the 1980s. A referendum will be held on October 30, 2005 to decide whether the region will merge with the current regions of Ica and Huancavelica to form the new Ica-Ayacucho-Huancavelica Region, as part of the decentralization process in Peru. The region is divided into 3 provinces, which are composed of 12 districts.

**Cajamarca**  
Is a region in Peru. Area: 33,248 km². Population: 1,259,808 (1993 census). The capital is the city of Cajamarca. The department is divided in 13 provinces.
Callao
Is a region located in the central coast of Peru. It is bordered by the Lima Province on the east, north and south; and by the Pacific Ocean on the west. It includes the city of Callao, which is Peru’s most important port, and the San Lorenzo, El Frontón, Cavinzas and Palomino islands. It is the country's smallest region.
The Callao region is composed of only one province, the Constitutional Province of Callao (Spanish: Provincia Constitucional del Callao).
Cusco is a region in Peru. It is bordered by the Ucayali Region on the north; the Madre de Dios and Puno regions on the east; the Arequipa Region on the south; and the Apurímac, Ayacucho and Junín regions on the west. Its capital is the city of Cusco, the capital of the Inca Empire. The Cusco region has a very diverse landscape where elevated alignments of mountains with vast altiplanos and plateaus with slight surfaces and deep valleys and canyons are mixed. The Eastern Andes mountain range, which is the spinal column of this region, has been strongly eroded by the complex system of courses of waters draining toward the jungle as well as glaciers. Nowadays only three chains of mountains are left from the old Eastern mountain range which are oriented from the southeast to northeast part, such as Vilcabamba which defines the hydrographic systems of the Urubamba and Apurímac rivers with elevated peaks like Salkantay and Pumasillo; the Vilcanota with its most important peak, the Ausangate, which is also the region's highest peak; and the Paucartambo with smaller dimensions than the previous channels. Also, Cusco has alignments of mountains with smaller elevations and local characteristics like the residual highlands which originate from the wearing of the old andean altiplano caused by strong erosion of rivers due to the high andean lifting. The two most important highland zones are: Vilcabamba enclosing the valley of Cusco and whose most important peak is Huanacaure; and the Mountains of Cusco, located at the north of the city, whose highest peak is the Pachatusan.
REGIONS

Cusco

Like in all Andean regions, the main rivers and its affluents have formed deep valleys and canyons, among the most important ones are those formed by the Urubamba, Apurímac and Paucartambo rivers.

The valley of Urubamba shows alluvial terraces in its thick soils where a strong population dedicated to agriculture is established. The Urubamba river, under 2000 m, has formed a deep and narrow canyon which reaches all its beauty close to Machu Picchu, showing a rare landscape of bends.

Due to the diversity of soil altitudes, the region has a great variety of climates and landscapes, which have strongly influenced on agriculture and the distribution of population.
Huanca velica
Is a region in Peru. Area: 22,131 km².
Population: 385,162 (1993 census). The capital is the city of Huanca velica. The region is divided in 7 provinces.
Huánuco

Is a region in central Peru. It is bordered by the La Libertad, San Martín, Loreto and Ucayali regions on the north; the Ucayali Region on the east; the Pasco Region on the south; and the Lima and Ancash regions on the west. Its capital is the city of Huánuco. Huánuco has a rough topography comprising parts of the Sierra and the High Jungle (mountain rim) regions. Being equidistant from the north and the south of the country, it has the privilege of having a mild weather with an average annual temperature of 20°C (68°F).

This region is important for its geographical location, history, and for the richness of its land, where the presence of man goes back to ancient times. El Hombre de Lauricocha (Man of Lauricocha) is among the most distinctive examples, dating from 10,000 BC, as well as Kotosh, where vestiges of the oldest settlement in the Americas (4,200 BC) took place.

Several ethnic groups inhabited this region. However, after a severe resistance, they started to incorporate as part of the Inca empire. Huánuco then became part of the Cusco-Cajamarca-Cusco route. In the beginning of the 19th century, during the emancipation process, Huánuco was one of the first cities to promote Peru’s independence. Moreover, a first oath took place in this city on December 15, 1820, after several uprisings in Huamalpies, Huallanca and Ambo.
Ica
Is a region in Peru. It borders the Pacific Ocean on the west; the Lima Region on the north; the Huancavelica and Ayacucho regions on the east; and the Arequipa Region on the south. Its capital is the city of Ica.

The Ica Region has a remarkable geography. It is the only region of the southern coast formed by plains also called coast plains since the Andean Cordillera is erected inside. Some geological folds have determined the formation of lands moving forward the sea which form the Paracas Peninsula while some isolated formations located at the southern part have determined the Marcona complex, a place where the biggest deposits of iron in the Pacific coast have been formed.

Ica’s configuration is due to the geomorphology of its two big and unique fluvial watersheds: the Pasco watershed and Ica watershed.

Also, it has an incomplete and continuous current inadequately called Rio Grande because its short waters do not even reach the sea; its waters are mainly used for agriculture in Pampa, Nazca and Ingenio, its final watershed is dry since sand and dried lands absorb its short resources. There are extensive deserts in Ica like the Lancha Pampas before Pozo Santo and Villacuri Pampas which are extremely hot areas. Strong and persistent winds called "Paracas" are present and originate large clouds of sand.
Regions

Junín

Is a region in the central highlands of Peru. Its capital is Huancayo. The region has a very heterogeneous topography. The western cordillera located near the border with the Lima Region, has snowy and ice covered peaks. On the east, there are high glacier valleys which end up in high plateaus (Altiplano). Among them is the Junín Plateau that is located between the cities of La Oroya and Cerro de Pasco.

The Mantaro Valley becomes wider before Jauja up to the limit with the Huancavelica Region. This area concentrates a large share of the region’s population. Towards the east, near the jungle, there is an abundance of narrow and deep canyons, with highly inclined hillsides, covered by woods under low-lying clouds.

The Huaytapallana Cordillera is located in the south central area of the region. This cordillera holds a great fault which is the reason earthquakes happen in the area.

The upper jungle, with valleys of great length, modelled by the Tulumayo, Paucartambo, Peréné and Ene rivers, is located on the eastern side of the region. Lake Junín, the largest lake entirely within Peru, is located in the region, except for its northernmost tip which belongs to the Pasco Region.
La Libertad
Is a region in northwestern Peru. It is bordered by the Lambayeque, Cajamarca and Amazonas regions on the north, the San Martín Region on the east, the Ancash and Huánuco regions on the south and the Pacific Ocean on the west. Its capital is Trujillo, which is the nation's third-largest city. The region's main port is Salaverry, located in Trujillo, which is also one of Peru's largest ports. The name of the region is Spanish for Freedom. La Libertad is the only Peruvian region that reaches all three Peruvian natural regions (coast, Sierra (highlands) and rainforest).

Trujillo, the capital of the La Libertad Region, has a great geographical importance and a good location. It is the point where the Andes are linked to the Pacific Ocean, as a result of the direction the coasts follow. The Andes first are seen from Trujillo, showing a row of low-elevation hills, but from there on the Andean Plateau increases altitude sharply to the East, in the provinces of Otuzco and Santiago de Chuco.

These two provinces comprise the Pacific hydrographic watershed, which give rise to the Moche and Virú rivers, to the south, and Chicama River to the north. Pacasmayo Province, located more to the north is a coastal province. Sánchez Carrión Province, to the east, belongs to the Atlantic watershed.
**Lambayeque**

Is a region in northwestern Peru, known for its rich Chimú and Moche historical past. The region’s name originates from the ancient pre-Inca civilization of the lambayeques. The city of Chiclayo is the region’s capital as well as its largest city. 

As part of the new decentralization process in Peru, this region is planned to become part of the Northern Region (Región Norte). The territory of the Lambayeque Region is made up by large plains irrigated by rivers from the Andes, in most of the area farming takes place due to the lack of water. However the valleys that are found in this area generate half of the sugar cane that is produced in Peru. In addition Lambayeque and Piura provide most of the rice crops consumed in Peru. This agriculture output is possible by a reservoir called “Proyecto Olmos” which holds an annual amount of 2,050 millions of cubic meters of water.

In a smaller scale in the last centuries, the Olmos Carob Tree Forest held goat herds that were fed with the food of this tree. This gave rise to the leather, cordobanes and soap industry.

There are two small islands off the Pacific coast of the Lambayeque Region: Lobos de Afuera, and Lobos de Tierra; there was a dispute with the Piura Region over ownership of the latter island.

The region is bordered by the Piura Region on the north, the Cajamarca Region on the southeast, the La Libertad Region on the south and the Pacific Ocean on the west.
The Lima Region
Also known as Lima Provincias, is one of twenty-five regions in Peru. Located in the central coast of the country, its capital is Huacho, although only provisorily as it has not yet been established which city will become the permanent regional capital. The Lima Province, which contains the city of Lima, the country's capital, is located on the western part of the Lima Region. However, this province is autonomous and not part of the region. The region is bordered by the Ancash Region on the north, the Huánuco, Pasco and Junín on the east, the Huancavelica Region on the southeast, and the Pacific Ocean and the Lima Province on the west. The region has a coastal and an Andean zone, and has a great diversity of natural regions: the Costa or Chala (0 to 500 meters above sea level) up to the Janca or Cordillera (over 4800 meters). The predominating regions are the Yunga (500 to 2300 meters above sea level) and Quechua (2300 to 3500 meters).
Loreto
Is Peru's northernmost region. Covering almost one-third of Peru's territory, Loreto is the nation's largest region and also one of the most sparsely populated ones, due to its remote location in the Amazon Rainforest. Its capital is the city of Iquitos.

The main river crossing the region is the Amazon, one of the world's most important rivers. Its numerous curves are always changing and sometimes make for a difficult journey. The width between banks of the Amazon sometimes measures a staggering 4 km. The Yavari river runs from Peru to Brazil, the Putumayo River serves as a border with Colombia, and the Ucayali and Marañón rivers penetrate Loreto after going through the Pongo de Manseriche.

Loreto's large territory comprises parts of the High and Low Jungle, all of its surface is covered with thick vegetation. This territory has wide river flood beds, which are covered with rainwater and usually are swamped in summer. In these flood areas there are elevated sectors called restingas, which always stand out on the Amazonian plain, even in times of the greatest swellings. There are numerous lagoons known as cochas and tipishcas, surrounded by marshy areas with abundant grass vegetation. Numerous rivers cross Loreto's territory, all of which are part of the Hydrographical Amazonian System. Most of them are navigable.
**AN INTRODUCTION TO PERU**

**REGIONS**

**Madre de Dios**
Is a region in southeastern Peru, bordering Brazil, Bolivia and the Peruvian regions of Puno, Cusco and Ucayali. Its capital is the city of Puerto Maldonado. The name of the region is a very common Spanish-language designation for the Virgin Mary, literally meaning the Virgin of the Dios. The region is almost entirely low-lying Amazonian rainforest. The climate is warm and damp, with average temperatures around 26°C (max. 34°C, min. 21°C). The rainy season is from December to March, when torrential rainfall causes rivers to swell and often burst their banks. Annual precipitation can be as much as 3 metres. The south-western boundary with the Cusco Region is known as the Isthmus of Fitzcarrald, a series of small mountains that separate the Madre de Dios River and the Urubamba River.

Due to the vast size of the area and its low population density, rivers provide the best way of getting from one town to another. Human activity is invariably confined to riverbanks. The only road of note is between Puerto Maldonado and the city of Cuzco (530 km away). However, it is in very poor condition and flights between Cuzco and Puerto Maldonado remain the most common and reliable method of transport between the two. From Puerto Maldonado there is a road to the mining town of Laberinto (“Labyrinth”) (about 50 km long). There is also a road between Cuzco and the town of Atalaya. It is roughly 300 km long, and impassable in the rainy season.
Moquegua
Is a coastal region in southern Peru. The region’s name is of Quechua origin and means "quiet place". While the regional capital is the city of Moquegua, the port city of Ilo is more commercially active. The region’s volcanoes and its geomorphology make its geography remarkable. It is formed by upstream portion of the Tambo River, one of the most torrential coastal rivers, which forms deep valleys that can be divided into three sectors, the first one being in the northwest, forming the Puquina-La Capilla sector. These are veritable oases enclaved in the rocks; arid hillsides and some terraces where horticulture is possible. High quality alfalfa as well as fruits, especially grapes, are produced here, due to a good climate and a rich soil. The second sector is the valley of Omate, one of the most populated and fertile soils of the department. The Ubinas Volcano, which is the only active one still active in Peru, is located nearby.

In the hillsides, the land is fertile in contrast with the desolation and sterility of its highlands. In the southern part of the Tambo River is located the town of Carumas, which along with Puquina and Omate, are the vital centers of this geography. The Moquegua River is a short run one and is formed by its tributaries: the Torata, Huaracane and Tumilaca rivers. After passing through the regional capital, it digs deep into a canyon called the Osmare.
AN INTRODUCTION TO PERU

REGIONS

Pasco
Is a region in central Peru. Its capital is Cerro de Pasco. The region is divided into 3 provinces (Spanish: provincias, singular: provincia), which are composed of 28 districts (distritos, singular: distrito). The provinces, with their capitals in parenthesis, are:
- Daniel Alcides Carrión (Yanahuanca)
- Oxapampa (Oxapampa)
- Pasco (Cerro de Pasco)

Piura
Is a coastal region in northwestern Peru. "Piura" is derived from the Quechua word pirhua, whose approximate meaning is "supply base", as the area was used by the Incas as a stop to get provisions during their conquest of the area's original inhabitants. Known for its warm tropical and dry or semitropical beaches, exquisite food and hospitable people; the region's capital is Piura and its largest port cities, Paita and Talara, are also among the most important in Peru.

As part of the ongoing decentralization process in Peru, a referendum will be held on October 30, 2005 to decide whether the region will merge with the current regions of Lambayeque and Tumbes to create the new Northern Region (Spanish: Región Norte). The Piura Region is bordered by the Tumbes Region to the north, southern Ecuador, Lambayeque Region on the south, the Cajamarca Region on the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The territory of the Piura Region has many climate variations due to its geographical location. It is just of 4 degrees south the equator yet receives both ocean currents at the same time: the cold Humboldt Current (19-15 °C) and the warm niño current (27-22 °C).
AN INTRODUCTION TO PERU

REGIONS

Piura
This makes Piura a confusing land both tropical and desert at the same time. Many call still call it piura:
The Land of where the Desert meets the Tropics
The coast is divided by the Peruvian subtropical desert of Sechura on the south and bushy like savanna tropical-dry forests to the center and north of the region. There are also small tropical valleys where rice and coconut fields are common, especially around the Piura and Sullana rivers.
There is a high Amazon climate (selva alta) as one goes away from the coast on to the sierra, Paramo climates and cooler temperatures appear as one climbs the sierra. Topography is smooth in the coast and rough in the Sierra. There are many desertic plains in the southern region.
The Sechura Desert, located south of the Piura River, is Peru’s largest desert and one of the world’s examples of how a tropical desert looks and boundaries a tropical terrain to the north.

The Bayóvar depression, which is the lowest point in the country, is located in this desert. The morphological forms most common in the coast are the dry ravine that suddenly become copious when there are heavy rains, forming tropical dry forests all over. Other features are half-moon shaped dunes, the marine terraces such as those of Máncora, Talara and Lobitos. Valleys formed by fluvial terraces from the Chira River and Piura Rivers. To the east, valleys are more or less deep and have been eroded by fluvial waters forming equatorial tropical-dry-forests. The major peak surpasses 3000 m. The Paso de Porculla, to the southwest of the territory is only 2,138 meters high and is the lowest of the Peruvian Andes. The rivers crossing its territory belong to the Pacific watershed and to the Amazon Basin. The Chira River is the most important and flows its waters into the Pacific Ocean. The Piura River, whose banks hold the city of the same name, only flows its waters into the sea during summer, which is the rainy season.
**Puno**

Is a region in southeastern Peru. It is bordered by Bolivia on the east, the Madre de Dios Region on the north, the Cusco and Arequipa regions on the west, the Moquegua Region on the southwest, and the Tacna Region on the south. Its capital is the city of Puno, which is located on Lake Titicaca. The Puno region is located in the Collao Plateau. The western part of Lake Titicaca, which is the world's highest navigable lake, is located in the region. The Andean mountains make up 70% of the region's territory, and the rest is covered by the Amazon rainforest. The climate is cold and dry, with a four-month rain season. On the other hand, the climate of the rainforest is warm. The water resources are taken from the Lake Titicaca, 50 lagoons and more than 300 rivers. There is also an important potential in underground waters.
San Martín
Is a region in northern Peru. Most of the region is located in the upper part of the Peruvian Amazon rainforest. Its capital is Moyobamba and the largest city in the region is Tarapoto.

The territory of San Martín can be divided into four morphological zones:
- The west, near the eastern side of the Andean Plateau, with a rough topography and many ravines;
- The zone of the wide valleys, with stepped terraces formed by the Huallaga River and its affluents, where population is engaged mainly in cattle and agriculture;
- The southwest zone, with a relief coming down from the Cordillera Azul, with low elevation, where is an impressive canyon known as Cajón de Sión, which finishes in the Cayumba rapids;
- A small lower jungle zone with areas easily flooded and with almost no accidents.

The Huallaga River is one of the most important rivers in the region. It forms, together with its tributaries an hydrographical system which drains all of the region’s territory. The Pongo de Aguirre is an important canyon formed by the Huallaga going through the Andean hills.
AN INTRODUCTION TO PERU

REGIONS

Tacna
Is the southernmost region in Peru. Its name originates from the Quechua words taka ("hit") and na ("place"), which would mean "I hit this place". This expression is thought to be related to the Quechua conquest of the Aymara people. The regional capital is the Heroic City of Tacna.
Present-day Tacna Region was occupied by forces from neighboring Chile as a result of the War of the Pacific. Tacna was reincorporated into Peruvian sovereignty in 1929 and today it is known for being one of the most patriotic areas in the country. The Tacna Region is bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west, the Moquegua Region on the north, the Puno Region on the northeast, the Bolivian La Paz Department on the east, and the Tarapacá Region of Chile on the south. The border between the Tacna Region and Chile is known as La Línea de la Concordia.

The region is located below the Titicaca plateau, and has a diverse geography, including volcanoes, deserts and mountainous zones, from which arise rivers that go over the punas and the plateaus, thus forming the hydrographical system of this zone. The region is small in size, but has a great mining and agriculture potential. It has various climates and a diverse production.
Tumbes
Is a coastal region in northwestern Peru. Due to the region's location near the Equatorial line it has a warm climate, with beaches that are considered among the finest in Peru. The Tumbes Region is located in a strategic zone due to its closeness to the Ecuadorian border. Despite its small area, this region has been privileged with a great variety of ecosystems.

The name "Tumbes" originates from either Tumpis, a group of native peoples from the area, the word tumbos, a species of Passiflora that used to abound in the area, or the name of the Tumba cacique, whose son founded and populated the area.

The Tumbes Region is bordered by the Ecuadorian provinces of El Oro and Loja on the east; the Piura Region on the south; and by the Pacific Ocean on the north and west. Morphologically, four zones can be defined in the region: the delta of the Tumbes and Zarumilla rivers; an alluvial plain north of the Tumbes River, with dry, low-depth ravines; ancient terraces that have been strongly eroded in the Máncora area; and the Amotape mountain range in the east and south, with its ending point at the El Barco Mountain. The delta of the Tumbes river is shallow and when the tide is low, little sandy keys show up, which get covered by mangrove vegetation.


Despite its reduced area (it is the second-smallest region in Peru), Tumbes has been privileged by nature with a great variety of ecosystems: mangroves, dry forests, the only coastal tropical forests in Peru, and a rich and warm sea. Around 50% of the region's territory is covered by three protected natural areas: the Manglares de Tumbes National Sanctuary (which is part of the Gulf of Guayaquil-Tumbes mangroves), the Cerros de Amotape National Park and the Tumbes Reserved Zone.
**Ucayali**

Is an inland region in Peru. Located in the Amazon rainforest, its name is derived from the Ucayali River. The regional capital is the city of Pucallpa. The Ucayali Region is bordered by the Brazilian state of Acre on the east; the region of Madre de Dios on the southeast; Cusco on the south; Junín, Pasco and Huánuco on the west; and Loreto on the north.
AN INTRODUCTION TO PERU

**GEOGRAPHY**

Peru is located in Western South America, bordering the Pacific Ocean, between Chile and Ecuador. It also shares borders with Colombia, Brazil and Bolivia.

The western coastal plains (costa) are separated from the eastern lowland jungle of the Amazon Basin (selva) by the high and rugged Andes in the center (sierra). On the border with Bolivia lies Lake Titicaca, the world's highest navigable lake at 3821 m.

A land rich in cultural heritage and a variety of natural environments, harbors 84 of the 118 known life zones of the earth.

Peru is a land rich in minerals, and its three types of land (Costa, Sierra y Selva) proportionate wonderful sights.

Peru’s various Geography permits the development of various activities, such as:

(In the Costa) Surfing, Sandboard, 4*4 and sandbuggy,
(In the Sierra) alpinism, rafting, rappelling, downhill and rally, and in the Selva you can enjoy hard excursions.

town to another.
POLITICS

The current president is Alejandro Toledo, leader of Perú Posible. This governing party is, with 45 seats, the largest in the 120-seat parliament.
The second and third largest parties are in opposition; respectively Partido Aprista Peruano (short: PAP, 28 seats), which is led by Alan García Pérez, and Unidad Nacional (short: UN, 17 seats), which is led by Lourdes Flores Nano.
ECONOMY

The Peruvian economy has become increasingly market oriented, with major privatizations completed since 1990 in the mining, electric/power, and telecommunications industries. Thanks to strong foreign investment and the cooperation between the former Fujimori administration, the IMF, and the World Bank, growth was strong in 1994-97 and inflation was brought under control. In 1998, El Niño’s impact on agriculture, the financial crisis in Asia, and instability in Brazilian markets undercut growth. And 1999 was another lean year for Peru, with the aftermath of El Niño and the Asian financial crisis working its way through the economy.

Lima did manage to complete negotiations for an Extended Fund Facility with the IMF in June 1999, although it subsequently had to renegotiate the targets. Pressure on spending grew in the run-up to the 2000 elections. Growth up to 2004 has been driven by construction, investment, domestic demand, and exports to different world regions. Peru’s economy is one of the better-managed in Latin America. Over the next few years, the country is likely to attract both domestic and foreign investment in the tourism, agriculture, mining, petroleum and natural gas, and power industries. According to The Economist, the Peruvian economy achieved the sixth largest growth worldwide in 2005. It has taken steps to consolidate a possible free trade agreement with United States of America; both countries wait for the approval of the terms by their respective congresses. Peru currently has a free trade agreement with the Andean Community, which is composed of: Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela. It also holds free trade agreements with many of the countries in Mercosur as well as Thailand, and during the recent APEC, Peru voiced intentions to sign free trade agreements with China, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. It is also pushing for a free trade agreement with the European Union.
Peru is one of only three countries in Latin America whose largest population segment is comprised of unmixed Amerindians - the other two being Bolivia and Guatemala, where almost half of all Peruvians are Amerindian, or 45 percent of the total population. The two major indigenous ethnic groups are the various Quechua-speaking populations, followed closely by the Aymará, as well as several dozen small Amerindian ethnic tribes scattered throughout the country beyond the Andes Mountains and in the Amazon basin. Mestizos, a term that denotes people of mixed European and Amerindian ancestry, constitute around 37% of the people, with the majority of them living in Peru's largest cities such as Trujillo, Arequipa and Lima. Amerindians who live in the Andean highlands speak Quechua and Aymara and are ethnically distinct from the diverse indigenous groups who live on the eastern side of the Andes and in the tropical lowlands adjacent to the Amazon basin.
AN INTRODUCTION TO PERU

LANGUAGE

Peru has two official languages - Spanish and the foremost indigenous language, Quechua. Spanish is used by all coastal Peruvians, the government, the media, and in education and formal commerce; although there is an increasing and organized effort to teach Quechua in public schools. The major obstacle to the diffusion of the usage and teaching of Quechua is the almost absolute lack of fluidly available material written in the Quechua language, namely books, newspapers, software, magazines, technical journals, etc. Importantly, non-governmental organizations as well as state sponsored groups are involved in projects to edit and translate major works into the Quechua language; for instance, in late 2005 a superb version of Don Quixote was presented in Quechua. Nevertheless, these books are just collectors items as they have no natural readership. Significantly, most of the native speakers of Quechua are illiterate. Thus, Quechua, along with Aymara and the minor indigenous languages, remains essentially an oral language.
The art of Peru was shaped by the melting between Spanish and Amerindian cultures. During pre-Columbian times, Peru was one of the major centers of artistic expression in The Americas, where Pre-Inca cultures, such as Chavín, Moche, Paracas, Huari (Wari), Nazca, Chimu, and Tiahuanaco developed high-quality pottery, textiles, jewelry, and sculpture. Drawing upon earlier cultures, the Incas continued to maintain these crafts but made even more impressive achievements in architecture. The mountain town of Machu Picchu and the buildings at Cuzco are excellent examples of Inca architectural design. Peru has passed early 20th century brought "indigenismo," expressed in a new awareness of Indian culture. Since World War II, Peruvian writers, artists, and intellectuals such as Cesar Vallejo and Jose Maria Arguedas have participated in worldwide intellectual and artistic movements, drawing especially on U.S. and European trends. During the colonial period, Spanish baroque fused with the rich Inca tradition to produce mestizo or creole art. The Cuzco school of largely anonymous Indian artists followed the Spanish baroque tradition with influence from the Italian, Flemish, and French schools. Painter Francisco Fierro made a distinctive contribution to this school with his portrayals of typical events, manners, and customs of mid-19th-century Peru. Francisco Lazo, forerunner of the indigenous school of painters, also achieved fame for his portraits. Peru's 20th-century art is known for its extraordinary variety of styles and stunning originality. In the decade after 1932, the "indigenous school" of painting headed by Jose Sabogal dominated the cultural scene in Peru. A subsequent reaction among Peruvian artists led to the beginning of modern Peruvian painting. Sabogal's resignation as director of the National School of Arts in 1943 coincided with the return of several Peruvian painters from Europe who revitalized "universal" and international styles of painting in Peru.
ART AND CULTURE

During the 1960s, Fernando de Szyszlo, an internationally recognized Peruvian artist, became the main advocate for abstract painting and pushed Peruvian art toward modernism. Peru remains an art-producing center with painters such as Fernando de Szyszlo, Gerardo Chavez, Jose Tola, Alberto Quintanilla, and Jose Carlos Ramos, along with sculptor Victor Delfin, gaining international stature. Promising young artists continue to develop now that Peru’s economy allows more promotion of the arts.
FOLKLORE AND MUSIC

Peru is home to thousands of dances of pre Inca, Andean and mestizo origin. The southern Andean region is famous for the Huayno and Cusco for its Muliza. Arequipa is the proud creator of the famous Yaravi Arequipeño (sang by many brothers of the Andes) and the Pampeñas. The Huaylas is a happy the dance of the central Andes.

The coast has a different feel to the Andean, more rhythm yet it just as melancholic and interesting. Coastal have big Romany gypsy music and African influences, along other more romantic tunes like the well know Peruvian Valse; probably representing the ethnical coastal mix of Perú and especially Lima.

Commonly known Peruvian Valse tunes are: Alma Corazon y Vida, Odiame, Mi Propiedad Privada, El Plebeyo, La Flor de La Canela and Devuelveme El Rosario de Mi Madre, some of which are sang by Caribbean artists in the Bolero or Salsa version.

Out of the resulting mix most coastal rhythms is sang and played by duos of Creole guitars, the Peruvian Cajon and spoon rhythms. African derived rhythms like the Festejo or Landó are common in the black communities of the southern coast. Music with a strong African influence is known as Afro Peruvian.

Chabuca Granda is widely considered as the most important composer of Coastal Creole music, with such songs as La Flor de La Canela, Fina Estampa, and José Antonio. Susana Baca is a renowned singer and composer of Afro Peruvian music. She won a Grammy award in 2002 for her album Lamento Negro.

The central and north coast Trujillo, Lambayeque and Piura; are most famous for guitar hymns like the piuran Tondero, the Limeñan Zamacueca, the Resbalosa and the bands of Marinera.

The Amazon has its own music. Chicha Music from the Amazon is unique since it mixes and intermingles Cumbia, Huayno and the tragic Peruvian Valse.
FOLKLORE AND MUSIC

Lima is famous for the Señor de los Milagros Procession and Bullfighting, which takes place in Plaza de Acho (the oldest bullfighting venue of the Americas). Considered the largest procession in South America, congregating devotees from all over the country, the Señor de los Milagros or Lord of Miracles Procession takes place during October. During the whole month, known as the mes morado -or purple month-, minor observations in honour of the patron (whose colour is purple) are celebrated. The main event occurs the 18th: dressed in purple habits, hundreds of thousands of devotees sing and pray while accompanying the image on its 24-hour route from the Nazareñas temple to La Merced church in the Barrios Altos district.
AN INTRODUCTION TO PERU

SPORTS

Soccer
The most popular Peruvian sport is soccer (World Cup appearances: 1930, 1970, 1978, 1982 two Copa America tournaments). Although the National team has not been very successful, most of the population of Peru follow the World Cup tournament on television. Soccer legends from Peru include Hugo Sotil, Cesar Cueto, and Teofilo Cubillas, Peru’s best striker in World Cup Finals with 10 goals. Current renowned players include midfielder Nolberto Solano (Newcastle United since 1998, with a 2-year parenthesis in Aston Villa), and strikers Claudio Pizzaro (Bayern Munich) and Jefferson Farfán (PSV Eindhoven).

Volleyball
Other popular sport is Women’s Volleyball (Silver medal in Seoul 1988 Olympic Games and 14 times South American champion).

Surfing

Sailing
Peru is the only country of the region that has won for six consecutive years the world Cup in the Sunfish Class. In addition, Peru has won the Central American, South American & Caribbean Championships for the same category. In the Optimist Class, it was three times World Champion in Team-Racing in 1997, 1998, and 1999.

Shooting
Peruvian shooters have won 3 of Peru’s 4 olympic medals. Edwin Vásquez won Peru’s only gold medal in London 1948 Olympic Games, while Francisco Boza (Los Angeles 1984), and Juan Giha (Barcelona 1992) both won silver medals.