

Country Handbook: Peru



Introduction



Travelling to see the work of Compassion and our local church partners firsthand is an unforgettable experience. On this trip, you'll see for yourself how children are known, loved and protected by their church communities and are being released from poverty in Jesus' name.

This Country Handbook is designed to start preparing you for your trip to Peru. Please read it before you depart, and we'd also recommend that you keep it handy for easy reference.

We pray that God will bless your time in Peru!

Country Information

Peru is a land of ancient wonders, breathtaking landscapes and vibrant traditions. From the depths of the Amazon rainforest to the soaring heights of the Andes, this remarkable country is home to Machu Picchu, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, and houses 70 per cent of the world's alpacas. Peruvian cuisine is well-renowned for its rich flavours (including the traditional dish 'cuy' which is a whole-roasted guinea pig), and along the colourful streets you'll likely spy locals proudly wearing Peruvian ponchos that can take up to six months to weave by hand.

Main languages:

Spanish

Climate:

Tropical in the east and dry in the west

Main religions:

Roman Catholic (60%),
Evangelical (14%)

Currency:

Sol (PEN)



Compassion in Peru

Compassion has been working to release children from poverty in Jesus' name in Peru since 1980. 26 per cent of people live below the national poverty line.

Compassion's Child Sponsorship Program is tailored to be age-appropriate for each child.

Children **AGED 1 TO 3** receive home-based care.

Children **AGED 3 TO 12** attend their local Compassion centre three days a week for two to four hours each day, or on Saturdays.

Students **AGED 12 TO 18** attend the centre for two days a week for three hours a day, or on Saturdays.

Compassion assisted children in Peru typically attend program activities at their local child development centres. Here is an example of what a typical program day looks like on a Saturday:

8:00am - Breakfast and devotion time. Children are usually given tea served with snacks like eggs, bread or buns.

9:00am - Spiritual lessons where children sing songs and learn Bible stories. Children receive age-appropriate Bibles across the course of their development.

10:30am - Break time where children can play in a safe environment and develop friendships.

11:00am - Social-emotional lessons ranging from conflict resolution to developing healthy self-esteem and a godly character. Children often come from challenging home environments and are taught social and personal skills.

12:00pm - Lunch and social time. Children generally receive a meal three days a week. A typical meal includes a dish of vegetable salad, a second dish of meat stew with beans and rice, and fruit and a refreshment. Centre cooks are frequently trained to prepare nutritious meals.

1:00pm - Health lessons where children learn practical health and hygiene advice on a range of topics such as the prevention of malaria and HIV.

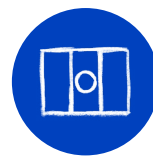
2:00pm - Letter writing and career planning. Older children work with local staff to identify their strengths and interests and set goals for their future.

In addition to Compassion's curriculum, children have opportunities to participate in activities such as camping or visiting a museum or cultural show. Students are offered vocational training in silk screening, jewellery-making, baking and buffet preparation. Parents of Compassion assisted children meet once a month to learn about a variety of topics.



For more information on Peru, scan the QR code or visit:
compassion.com.au/where-we-work/peru

Cultural Considerations



Greetings

- It's polite to greet all people you encounter, no matter how long you've known them. A simple 'buenos dias' (good day) along with a smile will go a long way in making a good first impression.
- The 'abrazo' is the most common greeting between friends and family, made up of a handshake and a hug for men, and a kiss on the right cheek between women.
- During introductions, you'll likely be asked questions about your relationship status, marriage and family. You might even be asked about your job and financial status. Although these questions might be considered invasive to Australians, in Peru it is considered polite to show an interest in such matters.

Body language

- With its roots in Spanish culture, Peru is hierarchal in nature and individuals tend to have considerable respect for those more senior to them. You will generally see, for example, the oldest person in the group served their food and drinks first, and Peruvians will often communicate in a quieter tone when speaking with someone of a higher social standing.
- In general, Peruvians can be quite expressive and emotive in their communication. Conversations can be loud, and there may be multiple conversations occurring at once.
- Peruvians around the Andes region tend to be a bit more formal and conservative. Eye contact with visitors in this community will be minimal, and it is best to avoid prolonged eye contact if travelling to this region.
- Peruvians will often point in the direction of things with their lips.

Security

- Please ask permission before you photograph any local people. This can include photos taken from a moving vehicle, so be sure to check with your driver or Trips and Visits Specialist first.

Emergency contact information:

Local emergency number: 105
Compassion Peru office: +51 1 6187200
Australian Embassy: +51 1 6300500

Clothing

- **Men:** The dress style in Peru is generally quite modest. When visiting a child development centre, tattoos, piercings and torn clothing should be covered up or avoided.
- **Women:** Please dress casually and modestly, avoiding shorts. When visiting a child development centre, cover up any tattoos and avoid skirts that are above the knee.
- Please remove hats and sunglasses when entering a church.
- It is best to wear closed-in shoes when visiting local church partners or children.

Eating and drinking

- Peruvian cuisine is a blend of European, African and East Asian influences, and often involves 'sharing dishes' which allow everyone at the table to sample various flavours. A standard diet typically consists of lots of flavoursome dishes involving corn, potatoes, legumes and meat. Soups, stews and salads are also commonly eaten.
- Before you begin eating, it's customary to say 'buen provecho' (enjoy your meal). It is customary to wait for everyone to be served before starting to eat—particularly those who are more senior.
- It is considered impolite to converse with only one person at the dining table. Try to include others in the conversation.
- When not holding utensils, it is best to keep your hands above the table, not in your lap.
- It is also considered polite to try and taste every dish on offer.
- Remember to accept and eat food with your right hand.
- It is uncommon for Christians to drink alcohol.

Language

Useful Spanish phrases:

Hello: Hola	How are you? Como estás?
Goodbye: Adios	I don't understand: No entiendo
Please: Por favor	I'm sorry: Lo lamento
Excuse me: Perdon	Good morning: Buenos dias
Yes: Si	Good night: Buenas noches
No: No	Thank you: Muchas gracias



Key Challenges and Prayer Points

Despite a wealth of natural beauty, Peru is home to areas of entrenched poverty with low student achievement scores. Though school enrollment has improved over the years, the quality of education remains low, particularly in more remote regions where the youth predominantly speak an indigenous language. While public education is free, many families can't afford uniforms, books, school supplies and transportation. Our local church partners are ensuring every child receives a good education by providing tutors and financial assistance for school-related expenses as needed. Older students also have opportunities to participate in vocational training. Please pray for children in Peru to receive the education they need to reach their potential and live full and flourishing lives.

Malnutrition and anemia are areas of national concern for Peruvian children. Many families send their children to work at a young age out of desperation to put food on the table. Please pray for our church partners in Peru as they continue to faithfully serve children in poverty by meeting their physical, relational, cognitive and spiritual needs, and bringing them hope.



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