

TRAVEL TIPS

South America offer travelers a rich combination of natural wonders and cultural treasures, making it one of the world's greatest destinations. Visitors will need a sense of adventure and the drive to discover for themselves the smallest details as well as major attractions, and above all the ability to get the most out of every experience. Please bear in mind the following advice when traveling in South America:

Travel Documents:



Travelers entering in most of the South American countries must carry a valid passport. Visas are not required for travelers from the United States, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, Europe and Mexico.

Any way, we kindly ask you to revise the updated regulation in your country just to double check you have all your documents in order.

Before arrival, make sure you take a photocopy of your passport (the page containing your personal information), so you can have it at all times.

In Peru, there is a special tax regulation for hotel services provided to visitors, so as soon as you enter in Peru, you will be exempt to pay sales tax on your hotel accommodation for up to 60 days.

Time Zone:



We will take Peru as an example of the referential times you should take into consideration when traveling to South America:

Peruvian time is 5 hours behind Universal Time, sharing the same time zone as Eastern Standard Time (EST) in the United States.

12:00hs in Peru = Time zones around the world:

10:00hs in Mexico City (Mexico).

12:00hs in New York (United States).

13:00hs in La Paz (Bolivia).

14:00hs in Santiago (Chile), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and Buenos Aires (Argentina).

18:00hs in Madrid (Spain).

02:00hs in Tokyo (Japan), the following day.

03:00hs in Sydney (Australia), the following day.

Altitude:



If you are visiting a destination situated at sea level, you will not have to worry about altitude problems.

Altitudes are a health challenge for some people and some of the main attractions in South America are located in the high lands like:

- La Paz, Bolivia: 4,061 masl / 13,323 fasl.
- Juliaca or Puno, Peru: 3,824 masl / 12,546 fasl.
- Cusco, Peru: 3,399 masl / 11,151 fasl.
- Huancayo, Peru 3,278 masl / 10,754 fasl.
- Huaraz – Ancash, Peru: 2.050 masl / 10,006 fasl.
- Arequipa, Peru: 2,335 masl / 7,660 fasl.

A change of environment implies a change in your body's barometric pressure and in the concentration of oxygen you are breathing.

These changes have two different effects: on one hand, your body's cells swell, making you feel uncomfortable, which you can fight by drinking plenty of fluids; on the other hand, since the oxygen is 15% less than at sea level, your body begins to produce more red blood cells.

Altitude sickness is characterized by small headaches, nausea or maybe vomiting, or something more complex, including pulmonary or cerebral edema. This can be avoided.

A period of normal altitude adaptation occurs on the second day, so at this time we recommend low physical activity, resting and drinking plenty of water.

Please eat lightly. When you eat a lot during your first days at high altitudes, your system requires more oxygen to process the food, which is taken from your muscles. That's why you feel fatigue and headache.

If you don't overwork your body, altitude sickness should not be a problem.

Follow the tips and your stay in South America won't have any setbacks.

Safety Measures:



Most of South America is a safe region; however, like anywhere else in the world, travelers are recommended to take normal precautions to avoid setbacks during their visit.

- Only carry with you the cash you will need, together with your credit card.
- Try not to exchange currency on the street. Exchange bureaus can be found in all main tourist cities and are much more reliable.
- Never lose sight of your credit or debit card when engaging in a transaction (most businesses have wireless terminals), and try to avoid using credit cards in small establishments (carry cash with you for smaller purchases).
- When withdrawing cash from an ATM, use machines located inside banks, hotels or shopping malls.
- Avoid ATMs that are not protected by cabins. ATMs have language options. Do not accept help from strangers you may see around ATMs.
- If you have valuable items with you, use them discreetly. Please remember that it is not a good idea to wear jewelry in busy areas. It is best to leave valuable objects like jewelry, passports and other items in the hotel safety box.
- Carry your camera, documents and mobile devices in a bag positioned in front of you at all times.

internet:



Internet access is widely available in South America's major cities and popular tourist destinations.

Most hotels offer a free internet service or internet-connected computers in their business center or internet corners.

Most coffee shops and restaurants offer free Wi-Fi connections and in some cities free Wi-Fi access is available in parks and airports.

Electricity:



Voltage in South America is mostly 220/240v 60 cycles.

Many hotels are also equipped with 110/120v sockets. Most sockets are of the equidistant two-pin type.

If your devices have a different type of plug, ask at the hotel reception for an adaptor.

Hairdryers are available at most hotels (from 3 stars upwards)

Religion:



Most South Americans are Catholics however; freedom of worship is respected.

In addition to rituals and celebrations associated to the Catholic faith, a number of mystical practices associated with ancient pre-Hispanic cultures remain alive to this day, as the result of a unique and remarkable process of religious syncretism.

Colonial churches, monasteries and convents house extremely valuable and interesting artworks. Take the time to visit these sites and admire their beauty.

Shopping:



Purchases can be made in local currency or US Dollars. The local currencies in South America are:

- Argentina: Argentinean pounds.
- Brazil: Reales.
- Bolivia: Bolivian pounds.
- Chile: Chilean pounds.
- Colombia: Colombian pounds.
- Peru: Peruvian soles.
- Ecuador is the only country in South America that adopted US Dollars as local currenc.

Check the exchange rate, which may vary from day-to-day, before making any transaction.

Credit cards and debit cards are accepted by most businesses (hotels, restaurants and stores). Small stores and handcraft markets tend to only accept cash.

Fortunately, there are ATMs in all major cities and at most popular attractions. We do not recommend bargaining. **We suggest you to demand quality products which support sustainability and benefit the local economy.**

Tiping:



It is usual to leave a 10% tip for waiter service in restaurants and coffee shops. In common with other parts of the world, tipping is subject to the customer's discretion and the quality of service received.

We suggest that tips are given in cash, so they will not be affected by banking or administrative commissions. Tipping taxi drivers is not expected.

Weather:



The geographic location of South America makes of it one of the world's most climatically diverse.

As an example, a total of 84 of the planet's 112 climate zones exist within Peru's borders, making it one of the most agriculturally rich nations on Earth.

Above the Equator, is is hot a humid most of the year.

Bellow the Equator there are two clearly defined seasons: the rainy season (during the summer months from December to March); and the dry season (during the winter months from April to November).

Clothing:



- Below the Equator, the temperature may vary considerably during the day.
- At night and in the early hours of the morning it is often cold and can be windy. At these times visitors should use warm clothing (a rain jacket is recommended during the rainy season).

For excursions and during periods of sunshine, visitors are recommended to use long-sleeved cotton shirts or t-shirts that will also provide some protection when temperatures fall suddenly. It is a good idea to carry a light jacket as protection against winds.

Walking in the cities is a very enjoyable experience. We recommend that you wear comfortable rubber-soled footwear.

It is very important to use sun block in all cities, particularly in high altitude. Travelers should use moisturizer for lips and hands, because the highland climate is dry.

Water:



Mains water is not recommended for drinking, although this is due to its mineral content rather than health concerns.

Mains water is fine for bathing and washing.

Please stick to bottled water for drinking.