Take in the highlights of South America in just 32 days on this tour of the continent's most awe-inspiring landscapes and vibrant cities. Start your action-packed adventure in Rio, Brazil’s party capital before heading to the spectacular Iguazu Falls. Then wing your way to Argentina to tango in Buenos Aires and taste wine in Mendoza, before visiting Chile’s striking Atacama Desert and Bolivia’s Uyuni salt flats. End your tour in Peru, trekking the Inca Trail and exploring the mighty Amazon.

**HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS**

**Trip Highlights**
- Rio de Janeiro - the party capital of the world
- Iguazu Falls - viewed from both Brazil and Argentina and the Devil’s Throat
- Buenos Aires - The Paris of South America
- Mendoza - Wine capital of Argentina and home of the Malbec
- Santiago - Chile’s cosmopolitan capital
- The Atacama Desert
- Salar de Uyuni - salt flats and unusual geography and Fish Island
- La Paz - a colonial city. Vist the Presidential Palace or the Witches Market
- Cuzco - Sacred Valley of the Incas, Pisac ruins, the temple of Ollantaytambo and local markets
- Puno & Lake Titicaca - the Uros floating reed islands and Taquile Island
- Amazon Jungle - guided tour of the rainforest, trekking and Monkey Island
- Inca Trail trek and Machu Picchu
- Lima - free time to explore the capital's vibrant markets and spanish colonial museums
- Guided tour of the Sacred Valley of the Incas, Machu Picchu and the Valley of the Moon
- Full day excursion on Lake Titicaca
- Drive on the Salar de Uyuni salt flats and entry to Laguna Colorado National Park
- Excursion to an Argentinian Winery
- Excursions to the Argentine and Brazilian side of Iguazu Falls

**What’s Included**
- 26 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners
- 24 nights in simple hotels, 2 nights hostels, 2 nights in a Jungle Lodge, 3 nights camping
- Airport arrival transfer on day 1
- Transportation by private vehicle, train, public bus, boat, 4WD
- Escorted by a tour leader
- Entrance fees for included excursions
- Two nights in the Amazon Jungle in Peru

**What’s Not Included**
- International flights and visas
- Items of a personal nature, additional meals and drinks
- Tipping – an entirely personal gesture

**DETAILED ITINERARY**

**Day 1 : Rio de Janeiro**

Upon arrival at Rio de Janeiro airport you’ll be met and transferred to our start hotel. The first day of your tour is simply an arrival day with no pre-organised activities. In order to allow time to
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relax and see some of the sights you may wish to add pre tour accommodation. On arrival please ask at the reception for information on when the pre departure meeting will be held.

Fantastic Rio de Janeiro has many things to see and do. A highlight for many would be to experience the majestic gaze of Christ the Redeemer at the top of Corcovado, the breath-taking panoramic views from the top of Sugarloaf Mountain, and the vibrant coloured tiles of the Selarón staircase. You can walk from the top of the staircase up to the quiet hill-top neighbourhood of Santa Teresa, with many quaint cafés and shops lining the cobblestone streets. In the city centre, you can stroll around Rio’s old colonial buildings and wander around the skyscrapers of the financial district. Alternatively, you may like to visit the Botanical Gardens, one of the world-famous beaches of Copacabana or Ipanema, or the beautiful Rodrigues de Freitas Lagoon. If you are in Rio de Janeiro around February/March, get ready for the world’s biggest party, the Rio Carnival.

Optional Excursions:

Full day Rio de Janeiro city tour – US$75
Pão de Açúcar (Sugar Loaf) cable car – US$30
Beaches – free
Maracana Stadium tour – US$7-35
Favela half day tour – US$35
Hang-gliding - US$240

Accommodation: Hotel Regina or similar

Overnight - Rio de Janeiro

Days 2-3 : Iguazu Falls

Rio de Janeiro - Foz do Iguacu. We fly over fertile farmlands to the Brazilian town of Foz do Iguacu, our base for visiting the famous Iguazu Falls - the most magnificent waterfalls in the world. Unlike most other waterfalls that have just one or two cataracts, at Iguazu Falls there are 275 cataracts in a magnificent 3 kilometre long U shape that we will visit from both the Brazil and Argentinean sides.

Visiting the Argentine side of the falls you can board a speed boat which will take you under the falls soaking you from head to toe, an optional adventure you’ll never forget! On the Argentine side you’ll also find the famous "Devil’s Throat" where fourteen falls drop with such force that there is always a massive cloud of spray overhead.

Visiting the Brazilian side of the falls will give you a completely different perspective from the Argentine side. On the Brazilian side you can see the falls by walking through the rainforest and along catwalks above and below the rushing water. You can also visit the world’s largest hydroelectric dam at Itaipu (optional) where you can learn more about the ecological issues faced during the dam’s construction. There is also a very interesting bird park nearby, perfect for that must-have photo with a toucan!

Included Excursions:

Iguazu Falls, visiting the Argentine and Brazilian sides from our base in Brazil

Optional Excursions:

Helicopter ride over the Falls – US$120
Bird Park – US$14
Rafain dinner and dance show – US$50
Itaipu Dam, including transport, presentation film and tour around the engineering marvel – US$25
Jungle 4WD and boat trips – US$12-60

Accommodation: Hotel Taroba Express or similar

Overnight - Foz do Iguacu (B:1)

Days 4-6 : Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires has a variety of craft markets, and if you stroll through them at the weekends you may come across live bands, barbecues, make-shift bars and practising tango dancers for a truly atmospheric Latin-American experience. San Telmo is the best market for antiques, while the market at Recoleta has great hand-made craft items. The nearby Recoleta Cemetery is also worth a visit – it has beautiful marble tombs and Eva Peron’s family tomb can be found here. No visit to Buenos Aires would be complete without a stroll around the upmarket boutiques and cafés of the Palermo district, and the contrasting bohemian barrio of La Boca, where poor inhabitants of the area used left-over paint from the nearby shipyards to paint their humble houses made of scrap metal in bright, block colours.

The city is also world-renowned for its incredible nightlife, with many nightclubs, bars, restaurants and cinemas open all night. For a great evening, you could see an authentic tango show in the city where the dance originated, and you can’t leave Buenos Aires without trying some of the best steaks in the world!

Optional Excursions:

Tango show & dinner – US$90
Hop on/hop off bus – US$20
Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes – Free

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Accommodation: 3 night(s) Hotel TWO or similar

Overnight - Buenos Aires (B:2)

Days 7-9: Mendoza

**Included Excursions:**
- Argentinian Winery

**Optional Excursions:**
- White water rafting – from US$40
- Wine/bodega tours
- Wine & bike tour – US$70
- Paragliding – US$90
- Wine/bodega tours
- White water rafting – from US$40
- Paragliding – US$90
- Parque San Martín – free

**Accommodation:** 3 night(s) Urbana Suites or similar

Overnight - Mendoza (B:2)

Days 10-12: Santiago

Mendoza - Santiago. We fly across the country to Mendoza, the epicentre of Argentina’s wine country. Mendoza is where General José de San Martín organised the army with which he liberated Chile and Peru from Spanish rule in 1818. Unfortunately, few historic buildings remain after an earthquake devastated the city in 1861. However, the city was rebuilt on a grid system, resulting in the broad tree-lined streets and beautiful green plazas for which the city is famous. There are great views from the top of “Cerro de la Gloria” at Parque San Martin, where you can also visit the local zoo. Situated on the foothills of the Andes, the city is a great base for some optional outdoor activities, such as white-water rafting, rappelling and horseback riding. But of course no trip to Mendoza would be complete without touring the surrounding vineyards. You can hire bikes and cycle the ‘Ruta de los Vinos’ (wine route), visiting both ancient cellars and working wineries – tasting some of the world’s best Malbecs en route.

Other interesting places to visit are the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, an impressive fine art gallery housed in a colossal neo-classical building, and the Cementerio General, a huge cemetery with large mausoleums including that of the former president Salvador Allende Gossens. Also worth a visit is the Plaza de Armas, the centrepiece of the city, which is bordered on one side by the impressive Metropolitan Cathedral of Santiago, completed in the 19th century.

For the best views of the city, take a funicular railway or hike to the top of San Cristobal, where the Statue of the Virgin overlooks the capital and the distant Andes. Here you can taste some of Chile’s best wines and find some beautifully situated swimming pools.

You may wish to take an optional excursion to the Chilean coast, about two hours’ drive from Santiago. You can wander around the creative port city of Valparaiso, which has a lively tradition of imaginative street art and painted murals, or you can relax in the upmarket beach resort of Viña del Mar, trying exquisite seafood in stylish restaurants that look out onto the Pacific Ocean.

**Optional Excursions:**
- Tours 4 Tips Walking Tours – Free (tip how much you think the tour is worth)
- Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes - US$1
- Museo Historico Nacional – US$1

The next day we head into the desert, exploring the Valley of the Moon by 4WD. This area is famous for salt-covered lunar landscapes, interesting rock formations, smoking geysers, salt flats and hot volcanic springs.

**Included Excursions:**
- Guided tour of the Valley of the Moon

**Accommodation:** 2 night(s) Hotel Don Raul or similar

Overnight - San Pedro de Atacama (B:1)
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Day 15 : Laguna Colorada

San Pedro de Atacama - Laguna Colorada. We continue our 4WD expedition and cross the border into Bolivia, into some of the most remote areas of the Bolivian Altiplano. You will see a variety of dramatic landscapes including smoking volcanoes, barren deserts and gravity-defying rock formations carved by the wind. In this incredibly empty landscape you'll most likely feel the furthest from civilisation you've ever been. You will visit the Laguna Colorada, which offers some truly breathtaking scenery, with several varieties of flamingos gathering in the shallow waters of the beautiful crimson lagoon.

Included Excursions:
Entrance to Laguna Colorada National Park
Accommodation: Multi-share hostel Overnight - Laguna Colorada (B, L, D)

Days 16-17 : Salar de Uyuní

Laguna Colorada - Uyuní. Continuing our exhilarating 4WD tour, we explore the epic Salar de Uyuní. Claimed to be the largest salt flat in the world, the brilliant white vast Salar de Uyuní, which covers some 10,500 square kilometres and is estimated to contain 10 billion tons of salt, looks like something from a surrealist painting and is estimated to cover 10,500 square kilometres. The island is named because it has the shape of a fish. The otherworldly views from Fish Island will take your breath away, with the brilliant blue sky (weather permitting of course) contrasting with the pure white of the salt flats. On this day we will also explore the Train Cemetery, where you can see the remains of 19th and early 20th century steam locomotives, and we visit Colchani, which is the main plant for the extraction of salt and the best place to observe the methods of salt extraction from the Salar.

Please Note: Occasionally in the rainy season the salt flats become overly flooded and we may have to alter the itinerary if the salt flats are not safe to traverse. Your tour leader will advise as early as possible if this is likely to happen on your tour.

Included Excursions:
Visit the Salar de Uyuní salt flats
Accommodation: 1 night(s) in basic, multi-share hostels Cashi Wasi or similar & 1 night(s) in hotels at Torito Hotel or similar Overnight - Uyuní (hostel) (B-2, L-1, D-1)

Days 18-19 : La Paz

Uyuní - La Paz. We fly across the country from Uyuní to La Paz. If it is a clear day, you will be able to see the huge expanse of the Altiplano as you fly over the landlocked country, perhaps seeing the Andes slowly flattening out to become the Amazonian basin, which spreads to the far East of the country, to the border with Brazil.

Built in a steep valley that protects the city from the harsh elements of the Altiplano, just about every building in La Paz is built on some sort of hill, so sightseeing will literally take your breath away! You will have two days to explore La Paz and its bustling atmosphere. Our hotel is very centrally located and is just around the corner from the city's colourful indigenous street markets including the fascinating and suitably named "Witches Market" where local women in traditional 'Cholita' dress sell such items as dead cats and llamas foetuses said to ward off evil spirits. The main square, Plaza Murillo, is also within walking distance. The square still retains its colonial buildings including the Presidential Palace. La Paz is possibly the best place to experience a traditional peña show of Andean music and dance to local bands playing time-honoured instruments such as zampoñas (pipes) and charangos (the ukulele).

Optional Excursions:
Red Caps walking tours – free (tips appreciated)
The World’s Most Dangerous Road Mountain Biking – US$107
Accommodation: 2 night(s) in hotels at Hotel Sagarnaga or similar Overnight - La Paz (B-1)

Days 20-21 : Puno & Lake Titicaca

La Paz - Puno. We travel by public bus across the border into Peru and on to Puno on the shores of Lake Titicaca, which at 3,855 metres above sea level, is the highest navigable lake in the world. We'll arrive in time so you can visit the colourful local market.

The next morning we depart Puno for our full day excursion on Lake Titicaca. We visit the floating Uros islands in the Bay of Puno, which are constructed by the islanders using reeds that grow in the shallow waters of the bay. You will get to meet the families who live on these islands, learning about their way of life and visiting their homes. You will also have the option to ride in a traditional reed boat before continuing our journey to the island of Taquile, a small island 45km offshore from Puno. It is well known for its tradition of intricate textiles and clothing knitted by the male locals. These textiles are regarded among the highest-quality handicrafts in Peru, and you will learn about this important tradition by meeting and interacting with the islanders. You will then have the option to have a lunch made of local produce before returning to Puno.

Included Excursions:
Full day excursion on Lake Titicaca

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TRIP NOTES

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Accommodation: 2 night(s) Munay Tambo or similar 

Overnight - Puno (B:2)

Day 22 : Cuzco
Puno - Cuzco. Today we travel from Puno to Cuzco, driving along roads abundant with herds of llamas, alpacas and vicuñas before reaching the Altiplano (high plain) where our journey takes us past hot mineral pools, snow capped mountains and through villages where the locals sell food, fur hats and alpaca sweaters. At the highest point, the La Raya pass at 4,321 metres, you can see the research station for high altitude animals. You will have the evening free to wander the beautiful porticos of Cuzco.

Accommodation: Hotel Cusco Plaza II or similar 

Overnight - Cuzco (B)

Day 23 : Sacred Valley
Cuzco - Sacred Valley. A full day is spent visiting the Sacred Valley of the Incas before staying the night with a local Peruvian family. Firstly we visit the Pisac ruins, perched on a hilltop with incredible views of the snow -capped mountains. We then go down to the famous traditional market of the same name, which is full of colour and atmosphere. A great place for souvenirs! After lunch, we continue along the valley to the temple/fortress of Ollantaytambo with its enormous Inca terracing constructed on the side of a steep mountain.

If you are doing the Inca Trek to Machu Picchu, tonight you will stay in Ollantaytambo. If you are not participating in the Lares Trek, please provide your Reservations Agent with your passport details (4,200 metres) which translates to “Dead Woman’s Pass”! You will cover approximately nine kilometres in about 5-7 hours and after the high pass it’s all down hill as the trail winds its way along old Inca stairs to our campsite.

Accommodation: Tika Wasi or similar

Overnight - Ollantaytambo (B)

Days 24-26 : The Inca Trail Trek

On day 24 we set out on the Inca Trail Trek. The Inca were a highly organised civilisation and created many Inca paths throughout the Andes in a network they called Qhapaq Ñan. The most famous of all the paths is known simply as Camino Inca or The Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, the royal route to the remains of the breathtaking mountaintop city of Machu Picchu. 

Due to a limited number of people being allowed on the trail a day, permits are limited and can sell out far in advance. If you wish to book the Inca Trail, please provide your Reservations Agent with your passport details by email as soon as possible so that we can secure your permit. Without your passport details, we are unable to arrange your Inca Trail Trek.

For information on the Lares Trek including what meals are included see the notes at the end of the itinerary. If you are not participating in either trek then you will visit Machu Picchu by train and have plenty of free time to enjoy the activities available in and around Cuzco. Meals are not provided during the time spent in Cuzco.

Included Excursions:
Permits and Guided three day hike on the Inca Trail 

Accommodation:3 night(s) in campsites on the Inca Trek Overnight - Inca Trail (camping) (B:3, L:3, D:3)

Day 27 : Machu Picchu
Machu Picchu - Cuzco. On the last morning of the Inca Trail Trek, after an overnight stop at Winay-Wayna, you will rise early for the final walk to Machu Picchu and greet daybreak over the famous “Sun Gate”. There will then be time to explore on your own or simply take in the history and mystery with such an awe-inspiring final destination.

The Inca Trail Trek can be demanding but can be completed by anyone who leads a reasonably active life - you certainly don't need to be an athlete. Everyone is able to walk at their own pace and there is no rush to finish. The trekking group is led by an expert local guide and supported by a team of porters and cooks, leaving you with only a small day pack to carry. If you are in any doubt or if you have any condition that may affect your ability to trek, we advise that you consult your doctor. Before embarking on the Inca Trail Trek we will have a briefing to prepare for the next few days and an early departure the following morning.

Day 24 - The trek begins after a short bus journey and the first day is a relatively easy 4½ hour 13 kilometre walk 

Day 25 - Today will be your biggest challenge as you reach the highest pass at Warmiwañusca (4,200 metres) which translates to “Dead
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magnificence of the place after your guided tour.

The Lost City of Machu Picchu was originally completely self-contained, surrounded by agricultural terraces sufficient to feed the population, and watered by natural springs. Located high above the fast flowing Urubamba River, the cloud shrouded ruins have palaces, baths, temples, storage rooms and some 150 houses, all in a remarkable state of preservation that will simply take your breath away.

The ruins were only discovered by the outside world in 1911, when American explorer Hiram Bingham found them while looking for another “lost city” called Vilcabamba. Due to their isolation many of the buildings are still quite intact and you can’t help but admire Huayna Picchu (“Young Mountain”), which towers above the ruins. After spending most of the day at Machu Picchu you have the chance to meander through the markets of Agua Calientes before enjoying a scenic train ride back to the Sacred Valley where our transfer to Cuzco will be waiting.

Included Excursions:
Guided Tour of Machu Picchu

Accommodation: Hotel Cusco Plaza II or similar

Overnight - Cuzco (B)

Day 28 : Cuzco

After four days of trekking through the Andes you’ll probably want some rest time and that’s exactly what today is all about. The day is free for you to relax and unwind, or explore more of Cuzco at your own pace.

The oldest continuously inhabited city in South America, Cuzco was the hub of the Incan Empire and features a population of around 300,000, most of who are indigenous. This marvellous colonial city is situated 3,310 metres above sea level and has numerous churches, some of which were built using recycled Inca masonry, as were many other buildings in Cuzco. The main square is called the Plaza de Armas, which has the beautiful cathedral on one side, which took a century to build, and the Church of La Compañía de Jesus on the other. The colonial arcades, which occupy the remainder of the plaza, are full of restaurants and shops. If you’re in the mood for a cultural experience, take a peek inside the 14th-century Inca palace which was later converted into the city’s Museo de Arte Religioso (Museum of Religious Art). Well worth exploring during your time here is the ancient archaeological site of Sacsayhuaman, which has the largest and most impressive Inca stonework of all.

If that all sounds a bit much, the city boasts some great markets, the most well-known being San Pedro where all kinds of textiles and artisan merchandise are sold, and you can enjoy a fresh fruit juice made by one of the welcoming locals. Or you can simply enjoy wandering the cobbled streets, enjoy a cup of coca tea in a local café and soak up the friendly atmosphere.

Optional Excursions:
Boleto Completo, valid for 10 days and includes entrance to most Inca ruin sites in Sacred Valley and Cusco – US$40 or 130 soles
Boleto Partial, includes just sites around Cusco – 70 soles
Massages – US$25/hr
City tour – US$30 + 70 soles entry if Completo has not been purchased
Chocolate making course – US$22

Accommodation: Hotel Cusco Plaza II or similar

Overnight - Cuzco (B)

Days 29-30 : The Amazon Jungle

Cuzco - The Amazon. Our rep will transfer you to the airport for your flight to the city of Puerto Maldonado located on the confluence of the Madre de Dios and Tambopata rivers. The city is the starting point for our visit to the Amazon rainforest.

In Puerto Maldonado you can pick up any last minute drinks or snacks in the busy markets and shops. The first leg of our journey is by bus followed by canoe, a 35 kilometre journey along the river (approx two hours total). The canoes are very safe.

Arriving at the lodge located on the river’s edge, you will be allocated a bungalow all of which are built from local indigenous materials. Each room is sealed by meshed netting to keep out mosquitoes and other insects. All rooms have basic private bathroom facilities. Due to the remoteness of the lodge there is no hot water and drinking water should be purchased. There is also limited electricity so please charge any electrical equipment prior to your arrival. In the evening the lodge and walkways are lit by oil lamps. Other facilities include a welcoming reception area, dining room and bar facilities. All excursions are led by English speaking local guides providing plenty of opportunity to enjoy marvelous jungle landscapes and rich diversity of flora and fauna.

After lunch we will set off on a trek through the rainforest along wooden walk ways. On the way our guide will stop to show you various species of bird and explain the medicinal plants and delicate ecological systems of the Amazon Jungle. The scenery is extremely varied incorporating dense jungle as well as marsh areas. You will see incredibly big trees, several metres in diameter and around 450 years old. There is an opportunity to take a canoe ride drifting along one of the small lakes hidden away in the jungle, observing caiman and the abundant bird life. We then return to the lodge for dinner.

After an early breakfast the following day we hike deeper in to the jungle, enjoying the surroundings and exploring the delights and hidden wonders of the Amazon Rainforest. We may also catch a glimpse of the rare giant otter. Afterwards we will enjoy the view of
Sth America Coast to Coast ex Rio

the lake from our viewing point/observation platform, where you can experience the canopy wildlife such as parrots, guacamayos, toucans, camunagos, shanshos, herons, turtles and caiman. We will return to the lodge for a well deserved lunch.

After lunch, we take a short boat trip across the Madre de Dios River to Monkey Island. On the way over you may spot caiman from the boat. Once on the island it is possible to see a great variety of monkeys such as the ‘maquisapa’, black and white ‘Martins’, ‘Leoncito de la Selva’ (Little Lions), ‘Frailes’ (Friars), ‘Achuñis’, ‘Ronsocos’ as well as an array of birdlife. In the evenings it is often possible to enjoy the wonderful sunset, one of the most impressive sights of the forest (weather permitting).

Included Excursions:
Excursions to the Amazon Jungle on foot and by boat

Accommodation: 2 night(s) in a jungle lodge at Eco Amazonia Lodge or similar Overnight - The Amazon (jungle lodge) (B, L, D:2)

Day 31 : Lima

The Amazon - Lima. Returning to Puerto Maldonado we take a flight to Lima. Lima was founded by the Spanish Conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1535 after he eradicated the Incas and made the city his capital. Lima has many fine colonial buildings and some of the best museums in South America including the Gold Museum, Museum of the Inquisition and the Catacombs below the San Francisco Church. Peru’s capital has much to offer and many of the sights, including the city’s two main squares the Plaza de Armas and Plaza San Martin, are within easy walking distance The Plaza de Armas houses the Cathedral, Municipal Palace and Presidential Palace where the changing of the guard can be seen every day at 12 noon. There are also many markets in Lima, possibly the best being in the central district.

Optional Excursions:
Museum Inquisition – free Monastery and Catacombs – US$3 guided tour Plaza San Martin, one of the largest and most impressive squares Paragliding – US$60 Magic water circuit park (largest water fountain park in the world) – US$2 plus taxi

Accommodation: Hotel Santa Cruz or similar Overnight - Lima (B)

Day 32 : Lima

Your adventure of a lifetime comes to an end today. If you have a late flight or have lengthened your stay by adding post tour accommodation you will have more time to explore the sights.

Arriving into Rio

Airport Transfers
An airport transfers is included in the tour price. Please look out for someone with a sign which has your name, Tucan Travel, or both after exiting the customs hall.

If you are delayed by more than an hour or you miss your connecting flight, in order for us to rearrange your transfer, please call the emergency contact number on your tour voucher with your new scheduled arrival time and flight details. We will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer.

If, for any reason, you have to make your own way to your hotel, you can either take a taxi from the rank outside or you buy a ticket at one of the pre-pay taxi desks just after you get out of the customs/luggage hall. You then hand your ticket to the driver rather than paying in the taxi. Licensed and unlicensed taxis are available outside but you will have to haggle for a good price which can be difficult if you do not speak Portuguese. It is also best to get them to write down the price (be clear on whether they are in Reals or US dollars). The airport is approximately 45 minutes from the city centre (depending on traffic).

Joining your tour

Unless your tour meets Rio Carnival, your joining location is:

Hotel Regina
Rua Ferreira Viana 29,
Flamengo,
Rio de Janeiro
Tel: +55-21-3289 9999
www.hotelsregina.com.br

If your tour meets Rio Carnival in February (regardless of whether or not you are adding the Rio Carnival package to your booking) your joining hotel may be different to the above and your joining hotel will be on your tour voucher.

The hotel serves a buffet breakfast consisting of eggs, fruits, bread and juices from 6 to 10am. The breakfast is included in your tour or accommodation costs.

The hotel has safe deposit boxes for your use. Please leave all of your important documents, money and travellers cheques here when you go out but remember to carry some form of ID and a photocopy of your passport with you. It is advisable not to wear chains or expensive looking watches or jewellery while in major South American cities. You should also keep your camera concealed when not in use and carry daypacks on your front for extra safety.

Arriving in Rio de Janeiro

On arrival in Rio de Janeiro, we recommend you change enough money into the local currency (real) for at least the first four or five days of your trip, especially if you are arriving on a Saturday night.

The exchange rate at the airport is just as good as in the city centre. There is the 24-hour Banco do Brasil on the third floor which will give cash advances with visa cards (also has ATMs). Please note that this bank gives better rates than the Cambio on the first floor of the international arrivals area.

Single Supplement

If you paid our single supplement for this tour, a single room will be provided for your comfort on most nights. Single rooms are not available.

Sth America Coast to Coast ex Rio - 32 days

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The Inca Trail
This tour includes the famous Inca Trail trek. The Inca Trail trek is a permit regulated activity which can have limited availability and sometimes sells out months in advance. It is closed in February for maintenance. Permits are booked with your passport details which must be provided to us in writing. We cannot guarantee permit availability until we have received your deposit, passport details in writing and have applied for your permit with the government-run office in Cuzco.

If permits are not available over your dates we offer an alternative trek called the Lares Trail. Both treks involve high altitude and require a certain level of fitness. Please check this with your doctor before travel and contact us if you have concerns.

Hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu
The trail itself involves approximately three days of walking. It is led by a guide and assistant guide(s) – one of whom will stay at the front and another at the back with the last person (you may have several assistant guides if your group is large). Therefore faster people do not have to wait and slower people do not feel they are holding anyone up. Groups tend to spread out naturally along the track and there are no prizes for being first and no shame in being the last.

Unlike climbing to the summit of a mountain, The Inca Trail trek is undulating and there are even (a few) flat sections. What this does mean is that on some days (particularly on day 2 up to the highest pass – ‘Dead Woman’s Pass’ at 4,200m) it can be a hard going (seemingly never ending!) uphill slog. Naturally the uphills are countered by some prolonged downhill sections and this can be even tougher on the legs.

It is important to remember that the trail is not three solid days of challenging trekking, rather it is varied and the difficulty level can change two or three times within the same day. The most imperative factor in tackling the trail is to take it slowly (try to take small, shuffling steps), walk at your own pace (this is vital) and remember that it is not a race! Drink plenty of water and take breathers often (buy a cheap walking stick in Ollantaytambo and lean on it rather than sitting down). Those who charge into every uphill section and want to be the first at every pass will find the trail the toughest.

Fitness
The Inca Trail is certainly not easy but you do not need to be an athlete or a trekking expert to complete it. Fitness is naturally important but it is the kind of trek that anyone with a positive attitude and determination can do. However the more fit you are the more you will enjoy the trail and the more chance you will have to take in the scenery and appreciate the Inca ruins dotted along the way. If you do not exercise regularly, it is advisable to do some extra walking or some kind of aerobic activity in the months leading up to your trip.

Many people worry whether they will be able to cope physically but complete failure is rare and would usually only result from severe altitude sickness or a person lacking even a basic level of fitness. Adults of all ages (from teenager to pensioner) complete the trek and age itself is no barrier if you are positive minded and live an active lifestyle. Before departing for your tour, we recommend visiting the doctor who will be able to provide you with more information. If you are planning to take your children to Peru, please be advised that the minimum age for hiking the Inca Trail is 13 years old.

Altitude
Altitude can affect anyone at moderate to high altitude (generally anything over 3,000 metres). Altitude sickness is caused by the lack of oxygen which can be up to a third less than at sea level. No one understands why some people are affected and others not and age, level of fitness and strength is no indication of how well you will fare. Be aware that altitude sickness can be serious, so if your guide advises you to rest or descend, please do as instructed. As the Inca Trail trek is a mixture of ascents and descents, altitude sickness is often short term and suffering from it does not necessarily mean you will be unable to complete the trek. Drugs are available to combat the effects of altitude sickness. We advise you to visit your doctor before you travel on all of our tours but when hiking the Inca Trail, it is imperative that you do so.

Staff & support
The trek will be led by an experienced guide with extensive local historical and archaeological knowledge. You will pass many Inca ruins along the way and your guide will conduct short tours wherever it is possible to do so. A team of porters will carry all equipment leaving you with just a small daypack to carry. The cook will prepare three meals a day (while camping) plus provide hot drinks and snacks.

Equipment & campsites
All camping gear (tents are two person) and cooking equipment is supplied (except sleeping bags). Each day the porters will overtake the group to arrive in camp well in advance. This gives them plenty of time to set up camp and start to prepare dinner. Tents are two person A-frame style and there is a communal dining tent for eating and staying dry – if it rains. Sleeping mats are provided and these will be laid out in the tents by the porters. When you get into camp you will be able to collect your duffle bag and access your clothes/toiletries. The porters usually also provide a small bowl of warm water, soap and a small flannel / towel for every person to wash their hands when reaching camp and each morning. Campfires are not permitted so there is not a lot to do after dinner and most people retire to bed early. Please note that campsites are subject to change depending on availability. You will be advised at the Inca Trail trek briefing of the exact campsites you will be staying at.

Toilets & showers
There are toilet blocks (with ceramic squat toilets) dotted along the Inca trail. These little blocks are usually well hidden from view and are surprisingly clean. Between these toilet blocks the only choice is to go ‘behind a bush’! Lunch stops are often made in the vicinity of a toilet block. Toilet blocks are usually available in camp on the second and third night. The location of camp on day one can vary and it is likely that you will have to use a toilet tent or the bush. Taking your own toilet roll is essential but it is important not to flush loo paper away. Showers are available at the campsites on day 3. On this night all trekkers camp at the same place so
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demand for the showers can be high, however as everyone arrives into camp at different times in the afternoon you may be lucky and not have to queue for too long.

Meals
The food provided by the porters and cook is nothing short of amazing. Trekkers can expect a breakfast of omelettes or pancakes, a ‘takeaway’ snack pack of fruit or chocolate to eat mid morning, a two course lunch of soup and meat with pasta or rice, afternoon tea on arrival at camp with biscuits and popcorn and a three course dinner. Breakfast and dinner is accompanied by hot drinks (tea, coffee, chocolate) and lunch usually by cordial (other drinks e.g. soft drinks or beer are at your own expense and can be pricey on the trail). All food is prepared, served and cleared away by the cook and porters and the quality of the meals is quite something when you consider that all the ingredients and basic cooking equipment has been carried in. Trekkers will certainly not go hungry and special dietary requirements can be catered for if specified in advance. You will be able to buy bottled water on day 1 and 2 of the trek at various points along the way, after this you will refill your empty bottles from boiled water provided by the porters. Boiled water will be provided during the trek when it is possible to make camp.

Tipping
Your porters, guides and cooks have amazing strength, stamina and skill and generally make your trek a thoroughly enjoyable and hassle-free experience. Most people would almost certainly not be able to complete the trek without them. It is therefore commonly accepted that the standard combined tip for guides, porters and cooks on the Inca Trail is US$40 per trekker.

Weather
The weather in the Andes can be very unpredictable and you should be equipped for bad weather. Peru is located in the southern hemisphere meaning the winter extends from June to August. In the summer months daytime temperatures can be extremely hot & humid, but the nights can be very cold. During winter it can be cold during the day and particularly cold at night. It is usual to encounter some rain on the trail all year round so a poncho is ideal along with thermal underwear if you really feel the cold. (Cheap throw away ponchos which fit over everything including your day pack can be bought in Cuzco for about US$1.)

Sleeping Bag
You will need a good warm sleeping bag for the Inca Trail trek. Where possible we recommend you bring your own sleeping bag, however adequate ones can be hired locally (for approximately US$14) but we can take no responsibility for the standard. If you are planning to hire a bag it is a good idea to bring a silk sleeping bag liner to use inside for added warmth and comfort.

A four season* (or -10) bag is recommended for the winter months. At other times you will probably be fine in a 3 season (or -4/-5) bag although this depends on how much you feel the cold and is given as a guideline only. Roll mats are provided on the Inca Trail however for greater comfort and warmth, Thermorest style mattresses can also be hired in Cuzco for US$10.

*Please note: If you are travelling in winter and you do not wish to invest in a 4 season bag you may want to consider purchasing a 3 season bag plus a sleeping bag liner and bringing additional clothing.

Footwear
Good quality, comfortable footwear is essential. Whatever you wear on your feet the most important thing is comfort. It is vital to ensure your boots are well worn in and lightweight. Ankle support and waterproofing is recommended but if you already have something comfortable with good grip on rocks then don’t go rushing out to buy new boots – you are better off with your well worn pair!

Luggage Storage and Load Limits
During the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu your main luggage will be stored in Cuzco and you will receive a small duffle bag at your Inca Trail briefing (which will be held the evening before you start the trek) to pack clothes and sleeping bag for 3-4 days. Your team of porters will carry these bags together with the food and equipment for the trail. Please note that you will not have access to these items until the end of each day as the porters will always be ahead of the group. You should therefore bring a day pack in which you can carry personal belongings such as your camera, water and sun screen etc. By Peruvian law the duffle bag must not weigh more than 5 kilograms (10lbs) which is to include your sleeping bag - this limit is set to protect the health of porters and animals. All bags will be weighed before being accepted. If you require more than 5 kilograms, it will then be your responsibility to carry the extra amount together with your day pack.

Packing List for the Inca Trail Trek
- Passport – You MUST take your passport and a photocopy is not sufficient. (Keep it in a plastic bag in case of rain).
- Sleeping bag
- Silk sleeping bag liner – Especially recommended if you plan to hire a sleeping bag but can also give your own bag added warmth
- Waterproof, well worn-in walking boots - Good quality, comfortable footwear is essential. Whatever you wear on your feet the most important thing is comfort. It is vital to ensure your boots are well worn in and lightweight. Ankle support and waterproofing is recommended but if you already have something comfortable with good grip on rocks then don’t go rushing out to buy new boots – you are better off with your well worn pair!
- Waterproof clothing - A plastic poncho is recommended and can be purchased locally for approximately US$1. Some trekkers also like to bring waterproof trousers, however a poncho will usually be sufficient if it covers your bag, body and most of your legs.
- Small lightweight umbrella – Light umbrellas which pack away to almost nothing can be useful to keep away drizzle.
- Plastic bags - to keep your belongings and clothes dry (wrap everything in plastic bags).
- Toilet paper - Most important! Also small plastic bags for rubbish which can then be thrown in the main rubbish bag provided by the porters.
- Small towel and basic personal toiletries - there is an opportunity for a shower at the campsite on the third night so bring travel size shampoo and shower gel if you would like to use it, plus wetwipes for the rest of the trek.

TRIP NOTES

updated on 01-12-2017

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- Water bottle – bring one large (1.5 litre) or two or three small water bottles that can be refilled on the trail with boiled water, which will be supplied when possible.
- Warm clothing for night time - Fleece, long pants, woollen hat, gloves
- Thermal underwear – If trekking in winter or you feel the cold
- Walking clothing in layers – e.g. zip off trousers, fleece, T-shirts
- Personal medication and basic first aid kit - Band aids, Imodium, Panadol, rehydration sachets
- Camera and spare batteries, memory cards or film - Please note: there are no electrical outlets on the Inca Trail so make sure you fully charge or/and have spare batteries!
- Snacks - Chocolates, chips, biscuits, energy bars. Snacks are provided during the trek but you may like to bring one or two extras just in case.
- Torch (flash-light) - (Very Important) and spare batteries.
- Sunscreen, sunglasses and sun hat
- Tropical strength insect repellent
- Antiseptic hand gel
- Swimwear for Aguas Calientes hot pools - Towels can be hired there for 3 soles.
- Flipflops / thongs / jandals – If you wish to tend to our constant daily needs. This makes our trek more authentic and within the tradition of the area.

After two hours of hiking we will arrive at Wacawasi, located at 3800 metres and one of the largest villages of direct descendants of the Incas, will be our first stop. We will see the unspoiled traditional daily activities of the local way of life. Continuing on, we follow the ancient trail to arrive at Sondor; at 4220 metres, this is our first campsite and home for tonight. Overnight - camping (B, L, D)

Day 25 - The Lares Trek
Sondor – Marcacocha - Pallata. The most captivating, this morning we cross our first high pass of Wacawasisaqa, at 4600m, which is located on the shoulder of the holy Pumahuanca mountains. Following on, we cross the second high pass of Wayruruyoc qasa at 4600m. We see spectacular views of Aruraycocha Lake, situated at 4380m. We also see the surrounding valleys and the Andean farmers dressed in their traditional, brightly coloured ponchos and head-wear, tending their crops and alpaca/llama herds. This is a remote and rarely visited region and our time here makes for an unforgettable experience, and supreme photographic opportunities. We will stop for a well-deserved lunch, at Siki estanque at 4120m, and this afternoon we continue on to Pajchayoaq, Ruka and Marcacocha and you will be welcomed by many children along the way who are back home from school. Late in the afternoon we will see Inca and pre Inca remains around Hatunayaorqo and Marcacocha and you will set off for Ollantaytambo. We stop to visit the dramatic Inca site of Pumamarca, which dominates the entire valley. From Pumamarca an original Inca trail carries us down the lush valley among Inca terracing of Tamboayalla, Chuchuna and Media Luna. We arrive in Ollantaytambo in time for lunch and after a quick rest we board the train, and following the Urubamba river we arrive at the small but well-known township of Aguas Calientes - the starting point for tomorrow’s visit to the astounding lost Inca City of Machu Picchu and our home for tonight. Aguas Calientes is named after its nearby hot springs. There is time here to relax in the soothing pools and there are plenty of restaurants to choose from for dinner (not included); Overnight - Aguas Calientes hotel (B)

Day 27 - Machu Picchu
Machu Picchu - Cuzco. Rising early we take the bus up to Machu Picchu to beat the thronging crowds which arrive mid morning. If members of your tour group have spent the past three days hiking the Inca Trail Trek, your early arrival will allow time to catch up and share stories of your respective treks before a full guided tour of the archaeological site. You will then have free time to independently explore this mystical Inca city. Returning to Aguas Calientes by bus we then catch the late afternoon train and bus back to Cuzco. Overnight - Cuzco

Lares Trek Quick Facts
Accommodation: 2 nights camping (two person tents, shared) with all meals provided, 1 night hotel.
Meals: All meals are provided during the trek.
Equipment and Facilities: All equipment is supplied for camping (except sleeping bags) and cooking. Facilities while camping are basic (shower on the last night and some toilets).
Transport: Transfers (minibus, bus and train) are included.
Group: The group size will vary depending on demand, however the trek group is subject to a maximum of 16 passengers (per guide).
Staff: English speaking guide, porters and cook.
Extras: Please budget for extra drinks (i.e. soft drinks and alcohol), tips and meals in Aguas Calientes.

Important Note

Sth America Coast to Coast ex Rio - 32 days
www.onthegotours.com
uk 020 7371 1113 info@onthegotours.com
AUS 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthegotours.com
NZ 0800 44 77 69 CAN 1 866 890 7038
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You will be required to pay a single supplement if you are the only person from a group tour hiking the Lares Trek. This is payable at the time of booking. However, if additional group members join your group after you have booked, the supplement will be refunded to you in Cuzco.

Train to Machu Picchu
If you do not wish to trek, you can take the train to Machu Picchu and enjoy additional free time in Cuzco. This is included in the tour price at no extra charge. Please note that meals are not included, apart from two breakfasts in Cuzco. Your itinerary during the four days when other group members are trekking will be as follows....

Days 24 & 25 - Cuzco
Free time to explore Cuzco. Overnight - Cuzco (2) (B,D)

Day 26 - Aguas Calientes
Take a scenic train journey to Aguas Calientes, a town which is named after its nearby hot springs. There is time here to relax in the soothing pools and there are plenty of restaurants to choose from for dinner (not included). Overnight - Aguas Calientes

Day 27 - Machu Picchu
Machu Picchu - Cuzco. Rising early take the bus up to Machu Picchu. Meet up with the rest of your tour group who have been trekking and enjoy a full guided tour of the archaeological site. You will then have free time to explore this mystical Inca city. Returning to Aguas Calientes by bus we then catch the late afternoon train and bus back to Cuzco. Overnight - Cuzco

Hotels & Arrival Transfers

Arriving at the airport
When you arrive in your starting city the immigration officials may ask to see your onward flight ticket, so you should have your tour voucher and international flight ticket to hand.

Day 1 of all our tours is simply a joining day and the tour actually departs the joining city on day 2. The last day of your tour is the official departure day and is free for you to pack or sightsee before you depart. All tours are scheduled to arrive at your final destination the afternoon/evening before your departure day. Therefore very little time is spent in each of the starting and finishing cities and you will need to allow a few days at the beginning or end of your tour if you want to explore them further. This is particularly important for passengers joining tours in high altitude cities (Quito & La Paz) so that you can rest and acclimatise before the tour begins. We can book pre and post tour accommodation for you upon request.

Check in time is at 1300 hrs on day 1. If you wish to use the services of a room before or after checkout time, or you are arriving very early in the morning of day 1, you will need to book an extra night, which we can arrange for you. All rooms are on a bed only basis unless otherwise indicated.

An airport arrival transfer is included. Departure transfers are not included but can be booked for an additional fee.

Important: If you are delayed by more than an hour or you miss your connecting flight, in order for us to rearrange your transfer, please call your emergency contact number on the voucher with your new scheduled arrival time and flight details. We will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer.

Missing your tour departure
If you miss the start of your tour, please ask at the reception of the hotel for a message from your tour leader which will give you instructions on how to catch up with the group. Any associated costs will be at your own expense (although, depending on the reason, you may be able to claim these from your travel insurance so ensure you keep all receipts).

If you know in advance that you are unlikely to arrive on time, please contact Tucan Travel immediately so we can inform the tour leader. Tucan Travel cannot be held responsible should your airline/boat/coach be delayed and we are unable to refund any unused portion of your tour.

Welcome Meeting
South America Group Tours - The address of your start hotel can be found on your Tour Voucher. On arrival you should look for a Tucan Travel information sheet and welcome note on the hotel notice board where you will find details of the pre-departure/welcome meeting.

The tour leader or a representative will normally hold the pre-departure meeting early in the evening of day one. This meeting is usually held at 6pm, assuming that all travellers have arrived by then. You will be briefed about the tour, given an outline itinerary for the next few days and any questions will be answered. After the meeting there is usually an option for everyone to go out for dinner and drinks to start to get to know one another.

Please note that you will need to bring the following items to the pre departure meeting:

- The original copy and a photocopy of your passport
- Vaccination certificates (if required)
- Travel voucher
- Details of your travel insurance policy number and their 24hr emergency contact number

Our Itineraries
Our detailed day by day itineraries are provided in good faith and it is our intention to adhere to the published route but please be aware that changes may be made before or during your tour for operational or safety reasons or to incorporate improvements. Impromptu changes may also occur whilst you are travelling as a result of one-off circumstances such as an excursion being closed on a particular day, weather conditions or transport. Delays are rare but occur occasionally and for this
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reason and the reasons above this itinerary should be considered as a guide only. Published transport times are approximations and may vary depending on local conditions.

Optional Excursions
During our South America Group Tours there will be free time to enjoy a range of optional excursions which are listed in the Trip Notes. Your tour leader will be able to make recommendations and bookings in advance for most of these activities so you have more flexibility and control over your itinerary. Please note that you may not have time to do all of the optional excursions listed. Should you wish to partake in optional activities in the city where you tour starts/ends, please check their is sufficient time to do so or alternatively consider booking pre/post tour accommodation.

Optional excursions are not operated by On The Go Tours / Tucan Travel and while every effort is made prices may not be up-to-date and are intended as a general guide to help you budget for your trip. Prices for vehicle-based excursions are approximate based on the optimum number of participants and the actual price may vary depending on group size.

Sufficient safety equipment such as helmets and life jackets are sometimes not available and On The Go Tours / Tucan Travel are unable to provide this equipment. If you intend to participate in an optional excursion you may like to consider bringing your own safety gear.

Excursions are run by a local operator or third party with both On The Go Tours / Tucan Travel and the Tour Leader acting as a booking agent only. Optional activities are not part of the tour and our booking conditions do not apply to them. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct travel insurance for the excursions you intend to take part in and On The Go Tours / Tucan Travel are not liable for any injuries incurred.

Spending Money
Spending money – allow approximately US$25-30 per day to cover meals, snacks, drinks, limited souvenirs, laundry, tips and any extras on our group tours.

Style of Tour
Our South America Group Tours are designed to suit travellers who love being able to travel on many different forms of transport with local people. There is a certain amount of involvement needed, which will mean carrying your own bags to the bus or train station or even helping the driver throw everyone’s packs onto the roof. If you enjoy meeting and interacting with local people and don’t mind roughing it occasionally, then these tours will be just right for you.

It is important that you are open to travelling with a range of different age groups. You must also satisfy yourself that you are fit enough to complete the itinerary as there are no refunds if you choose to leave the tour. Based on the nature of this travel style, our adventurous South America tours are generally suitable for people aged between 18 and 60 years old. If you have any questions about this please contact us or speak to your travel consultant.

Our South America tours suit people who are fit and active. On all of our tours there are many walks between bus/train terminals and hotels and travellers must be able to carry their own luggage over various terrains as well as lift up luggage onto the tops of buses so do not pack more than you can comfortably carry.

The average group size is 8 to 12 passengers with a maximum of 16, however on some included excursions group sizes may occasionally be larger.

Tour Leaders
Our South America Tours are escorted by a tour leader who will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the tour, so you are free to sit back, relax and enjoy the journey. Our tour leaders are genuine travel addicts who will share their passion for their destination with you.

You may be assisted at other times by other representatives, who will escort you at times when your tour leader may not be available. In addition, local guides are used to accompany many of our excursions, such as visits to archaeological sites and the Inca Trail Trek. Their knowledge of the local area and familiarity with its customs and history will enhance your experience by getting to know a country from a local’s perspective.

Our South America tours operate on a modular system with smaller tour sections joining and leaving the master tour throughout its duration. This means that you may start your tour with a local representative and then meet up with your tour leader and the rest of your group on day two of the tour.

Tipping
Although tipping is not a natural part of many Western cultures it is expected in South America, where many workers are very poorly paid and depend on tips for their main income. The local people work very hard to provide a good service and this is due in part to the tips they have received from foreigners in the past. However all tips are at your own discretion and you should not feel obliged or pressured to tip at any time – particularly if you feel that the level of service was not up to standard.

As a general guideline a gratuity of 10% of the total bill for your waiter is recommended in restaurants. You should be aware that prices on the menu often exclude service charges but they are added to the bill (10%) and local taxes (anywhere between 2% and 20%). If it is included then you are not expected to pay an additional tip, although this is still appreciated. Some restaurants have a ‘cubierto’ (cover charge) which is normally added onto the food section of the bill, not the total, so watch out for this when dividing the bill with other group members.

It is customary to tip your local guides on both included and optional excursions. As a guideline, we recommend US$5-3 per person for a half/full day excursion. Your tour leader will generally pass around an envelope for the local guide on included excursions. The tour leader will indicate on the envelope the amount of the tip usually given per person to the guide.

This information is given as a guide as many travellers are unsure how much to tip. Should you wish to give the local guide your tip personally and not with the group tip then please feel free to do so.
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Inca Trail and Lares Trek - the commonly accepted combined tip for guides, porters and cooks on the Inca Trail or Lares Trek is US$30 per trekker. This amount will be collected from each trekker by the tour leader and distributed amongst the Trail team usually at the last dinner.

Tips are also appreciated by your tour leader at the end of your tour. This, however, is only if you feel that their service was up to standard and is completely at your own discretion. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture.

Group Tour Accommodation
In South America we generally stay in small, locally-owned hotels rather than large international chains. We are occasionally far from towns and cities, staying in unique places such as jungle lodges, Chinese junk boats or remote home-stays. Depending on the tour, the accommodation we use is generally the equivalent in comfort of a two to three star hotel. We stay in small hotels, hostels and guest houses which are usually situated close to the main sights and town centres. They are chosen for their local character, ambiance, cleanliness and security. You will find comfortable rooms with en-suite facilities (although on rare occasions bathrooms may be shared). You may on rare occasions be required to stay in a triple room or in mixed gender dorms where accommodation options are limited.

All accommodation is included from the arrival day until check out time on the final day of the tour. Travellers will share rooms with other group members of the same gender. Mostly this will be in twin rooms although sometimes in triples depending on the group composition and hotel rooming structure.

Please note: Accommodation sometimes has erratic services such as a lack of hot water or no central heating. Depending on the tour, there may be occasions when you are camping or your overnight accommodation is on buses, trains or boats. More details on accommodation can be found on each tour itinerary page. Hotel staff don't always speak English and sometimes our reservations are "lost"! In general, facilities are very good but please be prepared for the occasional mishap, which is all part of the typical travel experience.

Transportation & Travel
On all of our South America Group Tours we use a variety of transportation. Vehicles can range from buses filled with local people and their many possessions to our to private minibuses, four-wheel drive vehicles and comfortable air-conditioned coaches. Sometimes you could be travelling on boats, trains, planes, ferries, private shuttle buses, boats, dugout canoes and taxis. Most bus transport is very comfortable, often with reclining seats. Please note that the four-wheel drive vehicles used when visiting the Salt Flats in Bolivia do not have heating, so you'll need to wrap up warm in colder months.

Our aim is not simply to get you from A to B, but to help you to experience each destination as a genuine traveller, not as a first class tourist. A word of warning - please remember that travelling conditions can sometimes be cramped.

The occasional long travel day is inevitable when you are covering large distances. Our South America Tours try to find the balance between long, short and non travel days, ensuring our itineraries aren't too tiring and give you time to explore. We cut down on travel times by including some short flights and overnight trains and buses. Each itinerary is different, so please check the tour itineraries for information on travel times.

Meals
On our South America Group Tours breakfast is often included. In remote areas such as the Amazon Jungle excursion and on the Inca Trail or Lares treks, much and dinner is also included. Most other meals are not included which gives you the flexibility to choose when and where you eat. Our tour leaders have a wealth of knowledge regarding local restaurants and can advise you of the best places to try the delicious and varied local cuisine.

What to Pack
Our South America tours often involve walks between bus or train terminals and hotels, so travellers must be able to carry their own luggage on various terrains, as well as lift luggage on to the tops of buses. We therefore recommend backpacks over suitcases, as you may be off the beaten track every now and again. It is important that you only pack what you can comfortably carry. By packing less you will have a more enjoyable tour and have more room in your luggage for souvenirs! On tours that include flights, we cover the cost of your checked baggage up to 20kg, even in cases where the airline policy is lower. All baggage over 20kg may still be checked, but charges will be the responsibility of the traveller.

In addition to your main bag, you will need a small daypack for your everyday excursions. Try to keep this bag as light as possible and make sure that all main sections of your bags can be padlocked. This daypack should have enough room to carry plenty of food and snacks for long hikes and treks and be big enough for an overnight excursions.

Essential for all tours
- Tour Voucher and Tour Trip Notes
- Passport - with at least six months after you have finished your tour with sufficient blank pages. (with 2 photocopies - one kept separately & the other to give to the tour leader with your next of kin details)
- Cash/ travellers cheques/ credit & debit cards (with photocopies kept separately)
- Travel insurance certificate (with a photocopy to be given to your tour leader)
- Spare passport photos (you may need these for obtaining visas)
- International airline tickets (with a photocopy kept separately)
- International Vaccination Certificate (Yellow Fever if applicable)
- International student card (may get you discounts into some sites)
- Your travel consultant’s phone number and email address (it is very important to have this as it is much easier to confirm/ change flights etc via your agent)

Suggested equipment (some useful, some necessary - use your discretion)
- Cotton money belt and/or pouch to store your valuables under your clothing
- Sunglasses
- Small calculator (to help with currency conversions)
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- Lockable pouch for your money and valuables to use in safety deposit boxes
- Plastic bags (very useful for wrapping camera equipment, soap, shampoo bottles, wet clothing etc)
- Inflatable pillow (if trekking in Peru)
- Sleeping Bag (if trekking in Peru)
- Small umbrella (also good for sun protection)
- Pegless washing line and travel laundry detergent (bio-degradable preferably)
- Torch
- Binoculars
- Travel alarm clock
- Travel plug adaptor
- Small medical kit with diarrhoea remedy, rehydration salts, antiseptic cream, sterile dressings, plasters, bandages, pain-killers, safety pins etc
- Small sewing kit
- Lip balm, sun block with high UV factor (this can be expensive to buy locally)
- Insect repellent (DEET 35% min) and bite cream
- Tampons/Sanitary towels
- Toilet paper (best to carry a roll with you at all times) and/or tissues (purchase locally)
- Antibacterial hand cleansing gel (the type you can use without water)
- Moistenated face tissues (e.g. Wet Ones)
- Ear plugs
- Travel sickness tablets (these are usually easy to buy over the counter locally)
- Cheap plastic wristwatch
- Spare pair of glasses or contact lenses and solution (a lens prescription is also advisable in case of loss or breakage)
- Camera /video camera with plenty of film or digital camera with spare memory cards
- Spare rechargeable batteries for camera etc
- Writing materials, address book and diary
- Pocket size Spanish phrasebook
- Travel games, cards & couple of paperbacks
- As gifts for local children - pens (with advertising on them), coloured pencils, small notepads. To discourage a begging mentality we recommend that you try to give these gifts at schools or childcare centres rather than on the street

Clothing & Footwear

All clothes should be lightweight, durable and easily washable. Please do not bring any military or camouflage-style clothing as it can be dangerous to wear and occasionally illegal. Everybody ALWAYS packs too much, so rather than bringing lots of chunky sweaters, wear clothing in layers when in the colder regions. Nights can be cold at higher altitude so it is a good idea to bring at least one pair of warm trousers or jeans plus several thinner sweaters/ fleeces which you can layer (note: it is very easy to buy extra sweaters/ jumpers locally).

Check the climate and altitude at www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour. We do not feel that it is necessary to include a full packing list as you will know what you need depending on the duration of your tour. However we do recommend that you bring the following:

- A lightweight water/windproof jacket with hood
- Easy to pack wide-brimmed hat or cap
- Sarong - very useful as a beach towel, bag, hat, shawl and wrap around
- Towel
- Swimwear
- Sandals/flip flops
- A lightweight water/windproof jacket with hood
- Easy to pack wide-brimmed hat or cap
- Sarong - very useful as a beach towel, bag, hat, shawl and wrap around
- Towel
- Swimwear
- Sandals/flip flops
- Toothpaste (in tube)
- Rehydration salts, antiseptic cream, sterile dressing, pain killer
- First aid kit
- 2 pin flat as in USA or 2 round pins)
- Travel plug adaptor (most countries either have a 110 volt system (albeit slower), but if you use 110 volt equipment it will work on a 110 volt system)
- Camera /video camera with plenty of film or digital camera with spare memory cards
- Spare rechargeable batteries for camera etc
- Writing materials, address book and diary
- Pocket size Spanish phrasebook
- Travel games, cards & couple of paperbacks
- As gifts for local children - pens (with advertising on them), coloured pencils, small notepads. To discourage a begging mentality we recommend that you try to give these gifts at schools or childcare centres rather than on the street

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- Towel
- Swimwear
- Sandals/flip flops
- Toothpaste (in tube)
- Rehydration salts, antiseptic cream, sterile dressing, pain killer
- First aid kit
Sth America Coast to Coast ex Rio

Personal Safety
It is not advisable to wear chains or expensive looking watches or jewellery while in many South American cities. You should also keep your camera concealed when not in use and carry daypacks on your front for extra safety. Crime in Latin America is not as bad as its reputation but you must be sensible and alert.

Argentina - Country Guide
Argentina - Fact File
- Official Name: Argentine Republic
- Capital: Buenos Aires
- Population: 38 million
- Total Area: 2.8 million square kilometres
- Official Language: Spanish
- Religions: Roman Catholic 92% (less than 20% practicing), Protestant 2%, Jewish 2%, other 4%
- Voltage: 220 volts. Argentina has European type two-pinned round sockets in most old buildings and the Australian style three-pin flat sockets in most new buildings.
- Dialling Code: +54
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -3
- Airport Departure Tax: US$18

Argentina - Visas
From 1st March 2013, Australian, Canadian and USA nationals have been required to pay a reciprocity fee online before entry into Argentina. This fee is set at the same amount Argentine nationals are required to pay for visas into these countries.

The fees are as follows: Canadian nationals: US$75* (single entry). USA nationals: US$160*. Australian nationals: US$160*.
*or its equivalent in Argentine pesos.

The amounts listed above may change according to the reciprocal visa fee amounts set by the other countries. The reciprocity fee needs to be paid in advance following the below steps.

1) Enter the web site www.migraciones.gov.ar or www.provinciapagos.com.ar of Provincia Pagos and register to start the process.
2) Complete the form with the corresponding personal and credit card information.
3) Print the payment receipt.
4) On arrival in Argentina, this printed receipt must be presented at Immigration Control. The receipt will be scanned by the Immigration officials, the information will be checked, and the traveller’s entry to the country registered.

Argentina - Climate
The Argentine climate ranges from hot and humid in the north to cold and windy in the south. In northern Argentina, summer is hot and winter fairly mild while in contrast, Tierra del Fuego, at the southern tip of Argentina, is quite often cold with continual winds, rain at times and freezing winter temperatures.

Buenos Aires, due to its position in the central region, has a Mediterranean climate with well-defined seasons. Spring, between September and November is mild, which contributes to the flourishing green colour of the plants and trees in the lush parks. Summer, between December and February, is dry and hot and winter can be cold. It usually begins to rain in April and reaches its highest level during June and July, then decreases gradually to almost nothing in November.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Argentina - Money
Important
In Latin America you will have problems changing the US$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not bring them. In some countries banks won’t even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President’s face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local currency
The monetary unit in Argentina is the Argentine peso. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs
We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. Visa, Mastercard, Diners and American Express are the best credit cards to bring however there can be problems at times getting money out from ATMs, so make sure you have sufficient cash for emergencies.

There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Argentina, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins.

Argentina - Local Transport
Much of Buenos Aires can be visited on foot. Most sightseeing in Buenos Aires can be reached on foot from our hotel, with La Boca being the furthest at about an hour’s walk. There is also a good, if rather dated, underground metro system (called the “subte”) which has 5 lines and is very cheap at approx $0.30 per journey.

There are local buses called “colectivos”, which are also inexpensive, but you MUST have the right change (ask hotel reception for prices) as you have to drop the money into a machine. We recommend you use taxis (black & yellow) at night as they are fairly cheap and usually have meters fitted. Just make sure that the driver turns it on when you get in. Remember that you will pay more for taxis at night.

Argentina - Food & Drink
As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US$1, a light meal will cost around $5-$6, and even a meal in one of the better restaurants in Buenos Aires costs very little in comparison to what you would expect to pay at home. Obviously this depends on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks, which will certainly increase the bill. If you eat in Puerto Madero or Recoleta in Buenos Aires you are likely to pay quite a bit more, however there is a huge choice of good reasonably-priced restaurants in the city centre where you can get a good meal (and great steaks).

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.
Sth America Coast to Coast ex Rio

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below;

- 1 litre of water US$0.70
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US$0.50
- 30cl bottle of beer US$0.70
- 50cl bottle of beer US$1.00
- Food

Food
In Argentina the basic diet focuses around meat mostly with French fries (papas fritas), mashed potatoes (pure) or ‘papas sufle’ (local typical deep fried potatoes that blow up like little balloons and are delicious). As there is a large Italian population you’ll have no problem getting pasta dishes or pizzas. In fact, in the larger cities, you’ll have no problem getting all types of food.

For breakfast it’s normal to eat croissants (media lunas) with a good strong coffee. Most Argentines would have a large lunch at around 1pm then at around 5pm, they all head to the ‘confiterias’ for tea, sandwiches and cakes. Dinner is usually eaten around 10pm and is often grilled beef (asado) in different forms. Other dishes include ‘lomo ala pimienta’ (pepper steak), giant ribs (asado de tira) and mixed grills (parrillada) which include beef, intestines, offal, blood sausage (morcilla) and spicy sausage (chorizos) or thick grilled steak (churrasco). ‘Bife de chorizo’ is a ramp steak (nothing to do with the sausage of the same name) and ‘bife a caballo’ is steak topped with a fried egg. Although seafood is not so common you can get fish (pescado) which can be served grilled, pan fried with breadcrumbs (apanado) or with a sauce. There are also plenty of chicken (pollo) dishes available. ‘Milanesa de pollo’ (boneless chicken cooked with breadcrumbs) is a favourite.

For a cheap and hearty meal ‘tenedor libre’ restaurants offer a fixed price buffet. These are usually very good value and you can eat as much as you like.

Vegetarians
If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular particularly in south Argentina. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives for included meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink
You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer. Argentina also has some of the best coffee in the world.

In Argentina some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be one within walking distance. Imported beers and spirits are available but local spirits tend to be cheaper. There is an array of rums, gins and brandy and the fabulous Argentine wines can be extremely cheap (from US$1 a bottle). There are also various brands of beers including Quilmes, Rubia, Negra Ahumada, and Negra Extra XXX.

Bolivia Country Guide

Bolivia - Fact File
- Official Name: Republic of Bolivia
- Capital: La Paz (administrative), Sucre (judicial)
- Population: 8.4 million
- Total Area: 1.1 million square kilometres
- Official Language: Spanish, Quechua and Aymara
- Religions: Roman Catholic 95%
- Voltage: 110 volts in La Paz and 220 volts in the rest of the country
- Dialling Code: +591
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -4
- Airport Departure Tax: US$25

Bolivia - Visas
Citizens of the EU, Canada and Australasia do not need a visa to enter Bolivia. Entry is granted on production of a passport valid for more than six months, a return air/bus ticket and proof of funds to support yourself for the duration of the stay. Many other nationals, including US and South African citizens do require visas. For the latest information on your specific visa requirements you should contact the local Bolivian Embassy or Consulate well in advance of your planned date of travel.

Bolivia entry/exit requirements: Your passport must contain a Bolivia entry stamp, without this you’ll have to pay a fine when you leave the country. If you enter Bolivia overland ensure that your passport is stamped on both sides of the border, with an exit stamp from the country you are leaving and an entry stamp on the Bolivian side.

Bolivia - Climate
Nicknamed the ‘Tibet of the Americas’, landlocked Bolivia is the highest and most isolated country in the Americas. With elevations ranging from sea level to over 6,880 metres, the Bolivian landscape offers a mind blowing array of complex ecosystems and stunning scenery. It is basically divided into three regions: Aitiplano (a plateau at an average of 4,000 metres above sea level, 800 kilometres long and about 130 kilometres wide); the yungas (a series of forested and well-watered valleys); and the llanos (the Amazon-Chaco lowlands). Because of the wide range of elevations and topography, there are many different climatic patterns. The overall temperatures are probably cooler than most people expect. Even in the humid forest regions of the north, frosts are not unheard of. Bolivia’s unprotected expanses contribute to variable weather conditions and the two climatic ‘poles’ are Puerto Suarez for its stifling, humid heat, and Uyuni for its near-Arctic cold and icy winds.

There’s no time that is perfect for the entire country, but December to March is when most of the rain falls. La Paz is always cool to cold at night, so be prepared with sweaters and windbreakers. La Paz can get quite warm during the day but sometimes mists swirl through the streets and the city can be literally wrapped in clouds. Throughout the country, night temperatures drop dramatically, and on the high Altiplano, when a cloud passes over the sun, the temperature plunges noticeably. In Cochabamba, Sucre and Tarija, winter is the time of clear, beautiful skies and optimum temperatures. The lowlands experience hot sunny days and an occasional shower to cool off and settle the dust.
Sth America Coast to Coast ex Rio

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Bolivia - Money

Important
In Latin America you will have problems changing the US$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not to bring them. In some countries banks won’t even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President’s face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local currency

The monetary unit in Bolivia is the boliviano (often referred to as the Peso), which is divided into 100 centavos. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com. Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Bolivia, however very large sums should be declared on arrival.

There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins – you may sometimes be offered sweets, cigarettes or even razor blades as change!

When arriving at the La Paz El Alto International Airport we suggest that you change some money at the bank (“Cambio”) in the main terminal building. Change enough money to see the sights.

Bolivia - Local Transport

Most of La Paz is easy to visit on foot, although walking up hill. There are various types of buses and minibuses which are very cheap but you will need to know which routes to use (ask at the hotel reception for assistance). There are also fixed route taxis “trufis” which are “colectivos” (meaning other people will be on-board). You can tell these taxis apart by their red number plates. We recommend the use of taxis at night as they are fairly cheap and much safer than walking. It is not common, however, for taxis to have meters so you will need to barter for a good price. In other Bolivian towns and cities walking is basically the best and cheapest way to see the sights.

Bolivia - Food & Drink

Food
In Bolivia the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and possibly a little salad. The Bolivian national dish is the parilada, a mixed grill with everything meaty including offal and intestines. Sajta de pollo is hot spicy chicken with onion, fresh potatoes plus dehydrated potatoes called chuno, lomo ala pimento is a pepper steak popular with travellers, fricase is juicy pork with chuno, silpancho is bread-crumbed meat with fried eggs, rice and banana, saice is a dish of mince meat with spicy sauce and potatoes, rice, onions and tomatoes and milanesa is beef or chicken breaded and fried like a schnitzel. For a simple fish, you should ask for pescado which can be grilled, pan fried with breadcrumbs or served with a sauce. Trout trucha is especially good from Lake Titicaca. Typical snacks include empanadas, pasties filled with cheese, humitas (maize pies), pucacapas (spicy cheese pies) and saltenas (meat or chicken pasties which you can get super spicy or mild). Much of Bolivia’s food is not too hot and spicy but you will find a bowl of aji (which is a chilli or hot pepper sauce) on most tables which can be added to spice things up.

In most of the larger cities and towns you will find an array of international cuisine. There are pizzerias on every corner and Chinese (chifas) food is very common. A cheap, filling 3 course lunch (normally called a comida del dia) can often be had for about US$1.50.

Vegetarians

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. You might find that you are eating a lot of omelettes and other egg dishes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals in the campsites, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water - US$0.60
- 30cl bottle of soft drink - US$0.50
- 30cl bottle of beer - US$1
- 50cl bottle of beer - US$1.50

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water and carbonated soft drinks are widely available and are generally safe to drink. Plastic sachets of flavoured chocolate and strawberry milk are also available.

In Bolivia some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be a bar within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available but usually at a high price. If you are happy to drink the local spirits then there is an array of rums and singani (distilled grapes). Imported Chilean and Argentine wine can sometimes also be found cheaply. A bottle of rum could be as little as US $5 in a local shop and quite often the mixer to go with it (Coke) is more expensive. There are various brands of beers including Pacena, Duval and El Inca (dark sweet stout).

Brazil Country Guide

Brazil - Fact File

- Official Name: Federal Republic of Brazil
- Capital: Brasilia
- Population: 176 million
- Total Area: 8.5 million square kilometres
- Official Language: Portuguese

Brazil - Country Guide

Vegetarian

Updated on 01-12-2017

This information has been compiled with care and good faith. They give an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. Any costs shown are subject to change, though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of On The Go Tours.
Sth America Coast to Coast ex Rio

- Religions: Roman Catholic 80%, Protestant 15%
- Voltage: Brazil has a variety of electrical voltages, sometimes within the same city and outlets often accept a range of plug types. For this reason, many hotels and campsites will label their outlets to make sure guests know what type of power they use. If an outlet lacks a label, this information will often be listed in the hotel services guide.

If in doubt, you should check with reception before plugging in an appliance.
- Dialling Code: +55

For other time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com
- Airport Departure Tax: none

Brazil - Visas
Citizens of most Western European nations, including the UK and Ireland, need only a passport valid for six months and either a return or onward ticket, or evidence of funds to pay for one, to enter Brazil. An entry card must be filled in on arrival to obtain a tourist permit allowing you to stay for 90 days. Australian, USA and Canadian citizens MUST obtain visas in advance and a return or onward ticket is usually a requirement. Do not lose the carbon copy of the entry card the police staple into your passport on arrival, as you may be fined on departure if you don’t present it. A sensible precaution is to photocopy it and keep it separate from your passport (or take a photograph of it).

Visa requirements do change periodically so you should check for the latest information on your specific visa requirements with your local Brazilian embassy or consulate well in advance of your planned date of travel.

Brazil - Climate
Brazil can be split into four distinct climatic regions. The coldest part - in fact the only part of Brazil which ever gets really cold - is the South and South East, the region roughly from central Minas Gerais to Rio Grande do Sul. Here, there’s a distinct winter between June and September, with occasional cold, wind and rain.

The coastal climate is exceptionally good and the 7,000 kilometres of coastline, from Paraná to near the equator, bask under a warm tropical climate. There is a winter, when there are cloudy days and sometimes the temperature dips below 25°C, and a rainy season, when it can really pour. In Rio and points south the summer rains last from October through to January, but they come much earlier in the northeast, lasting about three months from April in Fortaleza and Salvador, and from May in Recife. Even in winter or the rainy season, the weather will be excellent much of the time.

The average monthly temperature in the northeast doesn’t ever dip below 25°C and the interior is semi-arid. Rain is sparse and irregular, although violent. Amazônia is stereotyped as being steamy jungle with constant rainfall, but much of the region has a distinct dry season from July to October. Check the weather chart on our website or visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your trip.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

Brazil - Money
Important
In Latin America you will have problems changing the US$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not to bring them. In some countries banks won’t even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President’s face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2. At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

Local currency

The monetary unit in Brazil is the Real, which is divided into 100 centavos. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs
We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. Visa, Diners and American Express are the best credit cards to bring (Mastercard is not common in Brazil), however there can be problems at times getting money out from ATMs, so make sure you have sufficient cash for emergencies.

There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Brazil, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins.

When arriving at the Rio de Janeiro International Airport we suggest that you get some reals at one of the little banks in the terminal building or use one of the ATMs (as you come out of customs, take the escalators (to the right) to the top floor then go left and right to the end passing through the shops you will find about three ATMs together). Change enough money to see you through the first few days of your trip – particularly if it is a weekend.

Brazil - Local Transport
Much of Rio can be visited by bus or metro (although the latter doesn’t really cover many of the tourist sights). The buses are fast (remember, every Brazilian wants to be a motor racing driver, well at least the bus drivers), reliable and cheap. They are easy to use as you get on and pay the conductor who sits in a little booth then pass through a turnstile. Beware of thieves and pickpockets, especially before you pass through the turnstile.

Taxis are relatively cheap and we recommend using them at night. Most taxis have meters and you should insist that the driver switches it on.

In other Brazilian towns and cities walking is basically the best and cheapest way to see the sights (with the exception of Sao Paulo where the metro is the best way of getting around the city).

Brazil - Food & Drink
All meals are included when camping and lunch is included on travelling days in the truck. When staying in hotels lunch and dinner is at your own expense. (All hotels in Brazil include a buffet style breakfast, normally bread, cold meats, hams, cheese, fruits, juice, tea or coffee).

As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US$0.70, a light meal will cost around US$2-3, and a main meal with a couple of beers will cost around US$8. You will find that meals are generally much cheaper than...
you are accustomed at home but obviously this does depend on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks which will certainly increase the bill. Eating out in upmarket suburbs like Ipanema or Leblon in Rio will be more expensive.

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

Generally you will find that meals are much bigger than you are used to and, in many cases, one main meal will serve for two. Quite often the waiter will even suggest that two of you share it.

Food
In Brazil the basic diet focuses on meat and black beans. The favourite national dish, especially on Saturday lunchtimes is 'feijoada'. This consists of several meats (sausages, pork etc) in a delicious stew cooked with black beans and ‘farofa’ (manioc flour). This is normally accompanied by neat chachacha which will blow your head off at first but then become very mellow.

A ‘churrasco’ at a typical Churrascaria (BBQ) restaurant is another typical dish but go there with an empty stomach as you will get so much food. Every type of meat you can think of is served on giant swords and waiters wander around topping up your plate every few minutes. These restaurants also have great salad bars with lots of variety where you can help yourself as many times as you wish.

If you like fish ask for ‘peixe’ which can be grilled, pan fried with breadcrumbs or with a sauce. There are also plenty of chicken (Frango) dishes which are a good idea if you don’t like your food too salty (the beef normally comes very salty indeed).

Typical snacks available in lanchonetes and roadside truck-stops include ‘empadão’ (pastes with chicken or meat), ‘empadas’ (fried version of the latter), ‘coxinha’ (pear-shaped deep fried manioc flour with fish or chicken), ‘pão de queijo’ (hot roll made with cheese) and ‘salgados’ (savoury pastries).

For a cheap and hearty meal try the fixed priced ‘prato feito’ or ‘sortido’. While at the ‘comida por kilo’ pay by the kilo which is usually very good value.

Vegetarians
If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular you will just have to search a little harder for the restaurants that cater to your tastes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals in the campsite, but your patience and understanding is requested.

Drink
All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water - US$0.50
- 30cl bottle of soft drink - US$0.30
- 30cl bottle of beer - US$0.50
- 50cl bottle of beer - US$0.80

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water and carbonated soft drinks are widely available and are generally safe to drink. Surprisingly, although Brazil is one of the largest coffee producer in the world, most coffee in cafes and restaurants leaves a lot to be desired, so look out for a specialist coffee type cafe. For great fresh fruit juices (‘suços’), try the ‘lanchonetes’ where you can also get great snacks.

In Brazil some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be one within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available, but at a much higher price. There is an array of locally made rums, whiskies, gins, vermouth, campari and cachaca available cheaply. The latter is a sugar-cane liquor which is used in the Brazilian national drink ‘Caipirinha’ (a mix of cachaca, sugar, crushed ice and slices of squashed limes). Another variation is the ‘Batida’ which is cachaca mixed with a variety of fruit juices, crushed ice and sugar. There are various brands of beers including Brahma, Antarctica and Cerpa. Draught beer is called ‘chopp’.

Chile Country Guide

Chile - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Chile
- Capital: Santiago
- Population: 17.5 million
- Total Area: 756,950 square kilometres including Easter Island (Isla de Pascua) and Isla Sala y Gomez. Chile stretches over 4,300 kilometres from north to south, a distance roughly the same as that from San Francisco to New York, or Edinburgh to Baghdad.
- Official Language: Spanish
- Religions: Roman Catholic 89%, Protestant 11%
- Voltage: 220 volts. Chilean outlets use three round pins in a line, with the middle one being an earth. Two-pronged European style plugs can also be used.
- Dialling Code: +56
- Time Difference: GMT/UTC -4. For other time differences please visit www.timeanddate.com

Chile - Visas

Most nationals, including citizens of the EU, North American and Australasia do not need to acquire a visa in advance to enter Chile. However some nationalities must pay an entry fee on arrival by air (e.g. United States $100, Canada $55 and Australia $34, these costs may change). Entry is granted on production of a passport valid for more than six months, a return air/bus ticket and proof of funds to support yourself for the duration of the stay. Most nationalities can enter for up to 90 days, although it’s up to the immigration official to decide whether you’re allocated 30, 60 or 90 days on arrival. Visa requirements do change periodically so you should check for the latest information on your specific visa requirements with your local Chilean Embassy or Consulate well in advance of your planned date of travel.

Chile - Climate

Chile is very long and narrow (it is no more than 180 km wide at any point) and the Andes Mountains are a dominant feature running down the entire length of the country. Because of its length, Chile encompasses a variety of
climates (the country contains both arid deserts and icebergs). There’s no one time that’s perfect to visit every part of the country, but it seldom rains during October to March, humidity is low, midday temperatures reach about 32°C and the nights are cool. It is colder and rains a lot in Santiago and in the south in May to August.

A sweater (and, in the south, a heavy jacket) should be taken no matter when you go, as nights can be cool-to-cold nearly everywhere.

Santiago, due to its position in the central region, has a Mediterranean climate with well-defined seasons. Spring, between September and November is mild, which contributes to the flourishing green colour of the plants and trees. Summer, between December and February, is dry and hot although at night it cools down slightly, and on the coast this temperature drop can be much more extreme. Autumn is between March and May, and temperatures decrease gradually. Daytime winter temperatures are reasonable but mornings can be very cold.

Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

### Chile - Money

**Important** In Latin America you will have problems changing the US$100 CB B2 2001 series notes and it is important you do not to bring them. In some countries banks won’t even take them. The serial number is located in the top left hand corner and bottom right hand corner on the side with the President’s face. This serial number starts with CB and then a few more numbers and then directly under that B2.

At the bottom of the note near the signature of the Treasurer it says which series of notes it is and it is there that it says 2001 series.

**Local currency**

The monetary unit in Chile is the Chilean peso, which is divided into 100 centavos. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

**Changing money, credit cards & ATMs**

We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. Visa, Mastercard, Dinners and American Express are the best credit cards to bring however there can be problems at times getting money out from ATMs, so make sure you have sufficient cash for emergencies.

Travellers cheques must be changed before 12pm except at ‘casas de cambio’ (which do tend to offer better rates than banks anyway).

There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Chile, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins. When arriving at the Santiago International Airport we suggest that you get some Pesos at one of the little banks just inside the luggage hall or use one of the ATMs outside the terminal. Change enough money to see you through the first few days of your trip – particularly if it is a weekend.

### Chile - Local Transport

Much of Santiago can be visited on foot. There is a very good underground metro system which has three lines and is very cheap at US$0.40-0.60 per journey. You can also buy a 10 journey card for about US$4. The last trains are at around 10pm. There are local buses called micros, which are also cheap, but you should try to have the right change (ask at the hotel reception for prices). They also have ‘colectivos’ (shared taxis on fixed routes). We recommend the use of taxis at night as they are fairly cheap and usually have meters - just make sure that the driver turns it on when you get in. Remember that you will pay more for taxis at night.

### Chile - Food & Drink

All meals are included when camping and lunch is included on travelling days in the truck. When staying in hotels all meals are at your own expense. As a guideline a simple snack (e.g. a sandwich) can cost as little as US$1.50, a light meal will cost around US$5-8, and a meal in one of the better restaurants in Santiago will compare with developed countries in the west. Obviously this does depend on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks which will certainly increase the bill. In cheaper restaurants where Chileans and backpackers eat, you can get meals for as little as US$3 if you shop around.

Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

**Food**

In Chile the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and sometimes salad. Compared to countries further north, Chile’s cuisine is quite creative and tasty. ‘Cazuela de ave’ is a stew of large chunks of chicken, potatoes, rice, onions with green peppers and ‘pastel de choclo’ is a casserole of beef, onions and olives topped with a maize mash baked in an earthenware bowl. ‘Parillada’, a mixed grill of meats, offal and intestines served at your table in a charcoal brazier (miniature barbecue) is popular here as in all the southern countries. Other favourite dishes include ‘lomo ala pimenton’ (pepper steak) and ‘humitas’ (mashed corn mixed with spices and butter baked in a maize leaf).

Seafood is the basis for many of Chile’s favourite dishes and the ‘congrio’ is their national fish. One of the most popular ways to serve it is ‘caldillo de congro’ (a soup with large pieces of the fish with onions and potato balls). Other delicious fish include ‘corvina’ (bass), ‘albacore’ (swordfish) and ‘cojinoa’ (no translation). Try a ‘paila choncha’ (a bouillabaisse type dish with heaps of flavour) or a ‘parillada de mariscos’ a mixed seafood grill. There is a whole host of other seafood available including clams (almejas), mussels (choritos/cholgas), sea-urchin (erizo), barnacles (picorocos) and seaweed.

Typical snacks are ‘emanadas de pino’ (pasties with onions, raisins, olives meat and peppers) and ‘prietá’, a blood sausage (black pudding) stuffed with cabbage.

**Vegetarians**

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. However vegetarian alternatives are becoming more popular you will just have to search a little harder for the restaurants that cater to your tastes. Our tour leaders will do their best to provide interesting vegetarian alternatives when arranging group meals in the campsite, but your patience and understanding is requested.

**Drink**

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in
a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water US$1.50
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US$1
- 30cl bottle of beer US$1.50
- 50cl bottle of beer US$3

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water (especially outside of Santiago). Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer. However fruit juices are sometimes made from unboiled tap water, so could upset your stomach. An easy way around this is to order the juice ‘con leche’ with milk instead. For decent coffee try one of the cafe chains: Cafe Haiti, Tio Pepe or Cafe Brasil.

In Chile some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be one within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available, but tend to be expensive. Alternatively there is an array of local rums, gins, brandy available which can be extremely cheap (from US$1.50 a bottle). There are various brands of beers including Cristal, Escudo, Austral, Heiniken and Royal Guard (light), there is also a brown ale type beer from the south called Malta. Please note that many places will charge a refundable deposit for the bottles.

Peru - Fact File

- Official Name: Republic of Peru
- Capital: Lima
- Population: 32 million
- Total Area: 1.3 million square kilometres (twice the size of France)
- Official Language: Spanish, Quechua and Aymara also spoken in places
- Religions: Roman Catholic 90%
- Voltage: 220 volts. Sockets are a mixture of the European, two-pronged round variety and US flat-pin.
- Dialling Code: +51

Peru - Climate

Peru is unique in its wide variety of ecosystems ranging from the driest/hottest desert in the Americas, to the high Andean peaks (over 7,600 metres above sea level); and a two-thousand-kilometre-long belt of cloud forest, rich in flora and fauna, to a vast area of lowland Amazon jungle, covering more than half the country. The three main zones of Peru are known as La Costa (the coast), La Sierra (the mountains) and La Selva (the jungle).

Over the last few years, the Peruvian weather has been rather unsettled possibly as a result of global warming. However, it still rarely rains on the coast, although the Lima region does experience substantial smog, coastal fogs or mists and even drizzle; particularly between the months of May and November.

The climate in the Sierra and Selva regions can be divided into a wet season (November-April) and a dry season (May-October). There is, of course, some rain during the dry season, but it is much heavier and much more frequent in the wet season. Don't be put off by the expression "rainy season" however, as this normally means a couple of downpours each day rather than continuous rain.

Peru - Money

Local currency

The monetary unit in Peru is the Nuevo Sol. For up-to-date exchange rates with your own currency visit www.xe.com.

Changing money, credit cards & ATMs

We recommend that you bring cash/travellers cheques in US dollars only. For more information about the best way to carry your money please see the Pre departure information (which will be sent to you with confirmation of your booking). There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Peru, however very large sums should be declared on arrival. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins.

Important

Please note that ATMs in Peru do not always automatically release your credit or debit card at the time when you receive your money. Please be aware that you sometimes have to push a button to request your card to be returned. Many ATMs in main towns have instructions in English.

Peru - Local Transport

Taxi services are recommended for all journeys within a city. In Peru, taxi meters are not normally in evidence, so you will find yourself engaging in a bit of haggling with the driver to agree upon the fare. It is a good idea to find out in advance,
from your tour leader or the hotel receptionist, approximately how much the fare should be. It will also help if you can speak a few words of Spanish. You will almost certainly have to accept that you will pay more than the locals do.

Local buses are very cheap to use, but you really need to be able to speak reasonable Spanish to get by. There are also some bus stops/stations, especially in Lima, that are not recommended for tourists.

Peru - Food & Drink

Food

In Peru the basic diet focuses around chicken, beef or seafood, mostly with french fries or rice (or both) and possibly a little salad. Soups are also common and good value. Coastal dishes are seafood based and include 'ceviche' which is fish marinated in lemon juice, onion and hot peppers traditionally served with corn on the cob, cancha (toasted corn), yucca and sweet potatoes. 'Escabeche' is fish with onions, green and red peppers, prawns, cumin, hard boiled eggs, olives and sprinkled with cheese. The most common fish is 'corvina' (sea bass) which can come simply grilled or fried or with sauces. 'Chupe de camarones', a prawn stew, is another delicious dish certainly worth trying.

Corn and potatoes are Peru’s main vegetables – particularly in the highlands. ‘Causa’ is a dish made from yellow potatoes, lemons, peppers, hard-boiled eggs, olives, lettuce, sweet corn, sweet potato, cheese and onion sauce. ‘Choclo con queso’ is a large corn on the cob snack with very salty cheese. Other local favourites include 'tomales' which is like a boiled corn dumpling filled with chicken and wrapped in banana leaf and 'lomo saltado' which is a kind of stir-fry beef filled with chicken and wrapped in banana leaf.

An interesting local speciality is cuy (pronounced: cooee). This is roasted guinea pig which some people say tastes like chicken, and 'lomo saltado' which is a kind of stir-fry beef filled with chicken and wrapped in banana leaf.

In most of the larger cities and towns you will find an array of international cuisine. There are pizzerias on every corner and Chinese (chifas) restaurants in Cuzco or Lima costs very little in comparison to what you would expect to pay at home (usually around US$20-$30). Obviously this depends on what you order and if you have wine or other drinks which will certainly increase the bill. In cheaper restaurants where Peruvians and backpackers eat, you can get meals for as little as US$1.50. Your tour leader will be able to recommend restaurants.

Drink

In Peru some of the hotels we use have bars or serve alcoholic drinks. If there is not a bar in the hotel then there is sure to be a bar within walking distance. In more up-market hotels, imported beers and spirits are available but usually at a high price. If you are happy to drink the local spirits then there is an array of rums, pisco (white brandy) and even palatable wine. All these are very cheap, e.g. a bottle of rum could be as little as US$5 in a local shop. Quite often the mixer to go with it (Coke) is more expensive. There are various brands of beers including Cuzqueña, Arequipeña, Cristal and Pilsener.

The soft drink of choice in Peru and a source of national pride is the bright yellow Inca Kola. Possibly an acquired taste, but indisputably popular. So popular in fact that McDonalds forced Coca Cola to allow it to be sold in its Peruvian branches.

Regardless of origin it is the national drink of Peru (the fact that the town Pisco is in Peru lends credence to Peru's claim). Drank in a variety of ways, the most iconic is the pisco sour, which has a raw egg amongst its ingredients.

All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water US$0.70
- 30cl bottle of soft drink US$0.50
- 30cl bottle of beer US$0.70
- 50cl bottle of beer US$1.00

You should be wary of drinking the local tap water. Bottled water, carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices are widely available and much safer.

Peru - Bugs

If your tour includes a visit to a jungle region you should be prepared to encounter an array of wildlife – including many insects and spiders etc. Most creepy crawlies are completely harmless and will cause you no problems at all – in fact this is all part of the jungle experience. If you find something in your room it certainly doesn’t mean that the room is unclean – rather that you are in the jungle and it is completely normal. If you are uncomfortable with creepy crawlies it is a good idea to bring plenty of insect repellent spray and coils to place in your room and of course don’t leave any food lying around.