

FREE GUIDE

Peru Safety & Scam-Avoidance Guide

What every first-timer must know before landing in Lima

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1. Lima Airport — The First 15 Minutes

Jorge Chavez International Airport is where most scams begin. You are tired from a long flight, carrying everything you own, and strangers are very eager to help.

Taxis

- **Never take an unmarked taxi** from outside arrivals. Say no and keep walking.
- Use **Taxi Green** — the official airport taxi counter inside arrivals. Fixed-price tickets issued before you get in the car.
- Alternatively use **inDriver** or **Cabify** app — confirm driver plate before entering.

Money Exchange

- Exchange only at official bureaus inside the airport or bank ATMs. Street exchangers short-change tourists with sleight-of-hand.
- Withdraw only what you need for transport on arrival; use city ATMs (inside banks) the next day.

WARNING: A common scam involves a "friendly" stranger at arrivals offering to share a taxi. Never share a taxi with a stranger you just met.

2. Accommodation Safety

A four-star rating on a booking platform does not guarantee a safe neighbourhood. Some well-reviewed hotels are in areas I would not walk at night.

- **In Lima:** Stay in Miraflores or Barranco. Both are safe, walkable, and have excellent food.
- **In Cusco:** The historic centre and San Blas are safe. Avoid hotels near the bus station at night.
- **Altitude:** Cusco (3,400 m), Puno (3,800 m) require acclimatisation. Book a hotel that offers coca tea on arrival.

TIP: Google the hotel name + "neighbourhood" + "safe" before booking. Or email perulocaladvisor@proton.me and I'll tell you directly.

3. Street Safety in Major Cities

Petty theft is the most common issue for tourists in Lima, Cusco, and Arequipa. Awareness is your best tool.

Leave in your hotel

- Passport (carry a photo on your phone; police accept it).

- All cards except one. Keep a backup card separately.
- Expensive jewellery or headphones in high-traffic areas.

On the street

- Keep your phone in your front pocket when not in use. Phone snatching from hands is the most common theft.
- In markets, wear your daypack on your front.
- If someone squirts something on you (mustard, "bird dropping") — hold your belongings firmly and walk away. It is a distraction scam.

4. Tours, Tickets & the Machu Picchu Trap

Peru has a thriving industry of counterfeit and overpriced tour tickets. Machu Picchu is the most targeted site.

Machu Picchu tickets

- Buy **ONLY** at machupicchu.gob.pe — any other site is a reseller charging 40-200% more.
- Tickets sell out weeks or months in advance in high season (June-August). Book early.

Tour operators in Cusco

- Licensed quality operators have official certificates posted in their offices. Ask to see them.
- Aggressive touts on the street in Cusco almost always offer inferior quality.

WARNING: Many top Google results for "Machu Picchu tickets" are resellers. The only official site is machupicchu.gob.pe.

5. Altitude Sickness — Do Not Underestimate It

Altitude sickness (soroche) ruins more Peru itineraries than crime and bad weather combined. Cusco sits at 3,400 m, Puno at 3,800 m.

- **Acclimatize first:** Rest for 24 hours on arrival in Cusco before any major activity.
- **Hydrate:** Drink 3-4 litres of water per day at altitude.
- **Coca leaf tea:** Available at any hotel — it genuinely helps with mild symptoms.
- **Avoid alcohol** for the first 48 hours at altitude — it amplifies symptoms severely.
- **Diamox:** A prescription medication that prevents altitude sickness. Consult your doctor before travel.

TIP: If you feel dizzy or have a pounding headache, go to the nearest farmacia (pharmacy). Most have oxygen tanks for tourists.

6. Food & Water Safety

Peruvian food is extraordinary. The rules for staying healthy while enjoying it are simple.

- **Never drink tap water** in any city. Use bottled water or hotel-filtered water.
- **Ice in restaurants:** Fine in higher-end places; skip it at basic street stalls.
- **Ceviche:** Eat it at lunch (freshest), at established cevicherias. It is spectacular when done right.
- **Street food:** Generally safe at busy popular stalls (high turnover = fresh). Avoid anything sitting out for hours.

Need a Personalised Itinerary?

This guide covers the essentials — but every trip to Peru is different. If you want a day-by-day plan tailored to your dates and interests, contact us for a free 48-hour planning consultation.

perulocaladvisor.com/#contact

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