

TRAFALGAR
see the world from the inside



South America & Costa Rica

Know Before You Go

A step by step guide to your Trafalgar trip.

Your insider's journey begins...

Thank you for choosing Trafalgar to show you the insider's view of the South America and Costa Rica. A wealth of experience has taught us that your journey begins well before you leave home. So we have compiled this guide to provide you with as much information as possible to help you prepare for your travels. We look forward to welcoming you on the trip of a lifetime!



The Observatory, Chichen Itza

Before you go...

Travel Documents

A couple of weeks prior to your vacation you will receive your Trafalgar wallet with your travel documents and literature. These documents are valuable and contain a wealth of advice and essential information to make your vacation as enjoyable as possible. Please read them carefully before your departure.

Passports and Visas

You are responsible for all visas, permits, necessary health requirements, and any other documents as required by laws, regulations and orders of the countries visited. All guests require a passport valid for 6 months beyond the conclusion of their trip, along with appropriate visas. Some of our itineraries enter a country more than once, so multiple-entry visas may be required for some countries. Please contact your travel agent or applicable government authorities to get necessary travel information. See below for details of reciprocity fees applicable in Argentina and Chile.

Argentina

The Government of Argentina charges US citizens visiting Argentina for business or tourism a reciprocity fee of US\$140 per person. The fee is collected only at Buenos Aires Ezeiza International Airport. Once paid, the fee permits multiple entries into Argentina for ten years in accordance with United States visa reciprocity. The fee also applies to Australian and Canadian citizens. It may be paid in cash or by credit card.

Chile

Citizens of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand need only a valid passport to enter Chile. Chile charges a reciprocity fee upon entry to citizens of the following countries: USA – US\$131, Australia – US\$61, Canada – US\$132, and Mexico – US\$23. Visitors from the UK and New Zealand do not pay a fee. The one-time fee is good for the life of a traveler's passport, and is charged when entering through the Santiago airport only. Travelers crossing over land do not pay this fee. The fee should be paid by credit card at the airport counter to the left of Customs.

Before entering Chile, passengers will be requested to fill out a tourist card that allows visitors to stay for 90 days. This card must be retained as it will need to be presented to Customs when leaving the country.

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out a comprehensive travel insurance policy that covers you the entire time you are away from home. Your policy should cover the following:

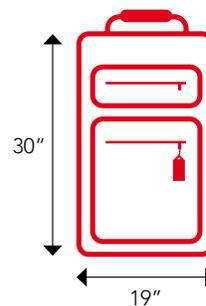
- Trip cancellation or curtailment
- Loss or damage to property and baggage
- Loss of cash, traveler's checks, etc.
- Medical costs and personal accident

Please ensure you pack a copy of your policy, contact phone numbers and instructions on how to claim in the unlikely event that it is necessary.

Trafalgar's Express Check-In

Trafalgar's Express Check-In is an online check-in facility that allows you to provide all your essential details and preferences to Trafalgar, prior to your departure, so that you don't have to fill in any additional forms on the first day of your vacation. In order for your Travel Director to receive your information, we recommend that you complete Express Check-In at least 30 days prior to your departure date. If it is already less than 30 days before your departure, please complete the registration form, print it and hand it to your Travel Director on the first day of your guided vacation. Check-in takes 5-10 minutes.

Visit www.trafalgar.com/express



Luggage

Porterage for one suitcase is included in the vacation price. Your bag should have dimensions not exceeding 30x19x10" 76x45x25 cm. For South America programs that do not go to the Galapagos, the maximum weight is 50 lbs (23 kg). For South America programs that include the Galapagos, the maximum weight is 44 lbs (20 kg). Airlines may have additional restrictions and may impose additional charges if you choose to check any baggage. Please contact your airline or refer to its website for detailed information regarding your airline's checked baggage policies.



Please note that airport porterage at the beginning and end of your guided vacation is not included. No responsibility is accepted for loss of or damage to baggage or any of your belongings. Baggage insurance is recommended.

Packing

When traveling as a couple, pack each suitcase with day and evening clothing for each person, so that in the unlikely event one of your suitcases is mislaid on your flight, you'll still be able to manage.

Ensure that your personal and vacation details are written on a label inside each suitcase (including name, address, telephone number, departure and return flight details). Write only your name and destination address on outside labels.

Make sure that your luggage is in good secure condition, and use a TSA approved lock for US security checkpoints. When carrying fragile items, use a rigid style suitcase for protection.

Check in only your own suitcases. Do not carry items packed by other people. Never accept packages or articles from anyone unknown to you to carry on board the aircraft.

There are strict airport security regulations on items that may be carried on board aircraft such as liquids/gels and metal objects. Visit the Transportation Security Administration's website at www.tsa.gov for information on these and other restricted items and how they must be displayed at airport security checkpoints.

We suggest you pack only essential items for daytime use in your hand-baggage, both for your flight and while on the coach. For example, your camera, medicines, anything that you use frequently or is particularly valuable. Expensive jewelry, clothing, etc. should be left at home for your peace of mind.

What to Bring

This will depend upon your personal preferences, where you are traveling to and the time of year you are traveling. Refer to individual country information for details on climate conditions that may affect what you pack. We generally recommend casual, lightweight, drip-dry clothing that requires little or no ironing. T-shirts and shorts are acceptable near the beach and in most resort areas. A long sleeve, loose fitting shirt and long pants will give protection from strong sun or insects in some forests and heavy vegetation areas and for visits to some rural locations or small towns where less modest attire may be frowned upon.

If a trip includes visits to the mountains, a jacket may be needed. A light pullover or jacket is useful for possible chilly nights in any destination. Two pairs of comfortable walking shoes are recommended for sightseeing.

Below is a list of items to consider packing for your Trafalgar vacation:

Clothing

Swimsuit	Undergarments
Sandals	Socks
Hat	Sleepwear
Shorts/skirts	Jeans/trousers
Warm jacket	Pullover/cardigan
Waterproof jacket	Shirts/blouses
Good walking shoes	

General Items

Spare batteries/charger	Camera & film/memory cards
Medications & prescriptions	Power plug adapters/converter
Toiletries	Collapsible umbrella
Insect repellent	Suntan lotion
Travel sewing kit	Pocket calculator
Plastic bags	Travel alarm clock
Water bottle (screw top lid)	Sunglasses
Sachets of washing powder	Money belt or holster

Essentials

Passport & Visas (where applicable)	Travel insurance policy
Traveler's Checks/Cash	Credit cards
Trafalgar documents	Airline tickets

NB Do not pack your passport or money in your suitcase.

Health

See individual country information for any specific health requirements or recommendations. Any changes in climate or diet can mean intestinal upsets for some travelers. Others experience few difficulties whatever the destination. Hotels and many other places in major cities make certain their food and drink is safe for visitors. However, it is always prudent to watch carefully what you eat and drink while on vacation. Bottled water is available in most locations.

In some remote areas, purified water is offered. Raw fruit and vegetables should always be peeled and, in some rural areas, avoided altogether. Many passengers ask their doctor to suggest remedies that can be carried along just in case.

If prescription drugs are needed, make certain the supply will last the duration of the trip and longer. Carry prescription drugs in their original package to avoid customs questions. Don't pack needed medicines in checked baggage. Also, you may wish to bring an extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses in your carry-on luggage.

Although not a general problem, insect bites can be a concern for some travelers. Ask a doctor or pharmacist about insect repellent choices. Similarly, sun protection can be a concern in many destinations. A good-sized sun hat and sunscreen lotion are recommended.

If you have any existing medical conditions, dietary requirements or disability that should be brought to our attention, it is essential that you inform us via your travel agent.

Make Friends Before You Go

When you travel with Trafalgar you will have the opportunity to meet new and interesting people from around the world. You can meet up with your fellow traveling companions by visiting Trafalgar's Online Community. Read posts from fellow travelers in our Online Forum and register for My Community, your private travel group portal. Visit www.trafalgar.com and click on the links at the bottom of the page.

Budgeting

Trafalgar itineraries include many features that will save you money on your trip – if you study your itinerary pages in the Trafalgar brochure you will see how many highlight visits and other sightseeing is included, as well as meals and entertainment. However, you'll find you have plenty of time to explore independently during your vacation, so we recommend you budget for incidental expenses such as non-included meals, drinks, tips, shopping and optional excursions.

Optional Excursions

Experience has shown us that most guests participate in these optional activities and you should therefore budget for them in advance. Please read your travel documents prior to the start of your vacation for prices and information on any optional excursions you may wish to participate in.

Money

Since currency rates fluctuate on a daily basis, contact your bank or foreign exchange service just prior to travel for up-to-date information. In general, it is unnecessary to change money into local currencies prior to travel. A better exchange rate may be available in the countries visited. Even so, it may be convenient to have some local currency available immediately upon arrival.

In rural areas and on weekends in some cities, it may not be possible to exchange currency at all. Plan ahead based on the itinerary. Check with your bankcard company regarding possible ATM availability. Make certain the card is activated for international use.

Traveler's Checks offer protection with replacement possible in case of loss or theft. When replacement is necessary, the receipt must be provided as well as a list of checks used. Keep that information separate from unused checks.

Credit Cards

American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are the most commonly accepted cards. Credit cards may not be accepted in smaller establishments, rural areas, etc. Some merchants may include a service charge (over and above the purchase price) for a credit card purchase.

If you make any purchases by credit card, you may be charged based on the exchange rate at the time the credit card company invoices your account and many banks charge an exchange fee. Please remember to keep a copy of your credit card details and emergency contact numbers in your suitcase in case of loss. The following offers some useful tips on using credit cards on your vacation:

- Call your credit card company to advise them you will be traveling, as some companies will block the credit card when they notice unusual charge activity.
- Ensure you memorize your Personal Identification Number (PIN); do not write it down.
- Ensure that your credit card is kept in view at all times when paying for goods and services.
- Retain all copies of sales vouchers until you have verified them against your statements.
- Make sure your credit card is carried on your person.
- Never leave your credit card unattended in your hotel room, a vehicle or any other place.
- Report immediately the loss or theft of your credit card.



Volcano Arenal, Costa Rica

While you are traveling...

Your Travel Director and Coach Driver

Throughout your Trafalgar guided vacation you will be accompanied by a professional Travel Director and experienced Coach Driver. A Trafalgar Travel Director is more than just a guide. They are seasoned and experienced travelers, specially selected for their in-depth knowledge of the regions you will visit. They will enrich your experience with informative commentary on the history, culture and natural landscape of the region and reveal the hidden places that only an insider would know. They will also introduce you to your traveling companions and make you feel welcome. Trafalgar's Coach Drivers are fully licensed, qualified and experienced professionals who are selected for their impeccable driving skills and record.

Your Vacation

Trafalgar's philosophy is that it's your vacation and you should have the freedom to enjoy yourself as you wish. However, a great deal of planning goes into your itinerary to ensure you see all the main sights in the places visited. Trafalgar ensures you enjoy a full sightseeing experience in all major towns and cities visited on your itinerary. Local sightseeing is conducted by qualified Local Guides who are eager to share their vast knowledge and love of the local history and culture. In other places, your Travel Director will give you a brief orientation drive or walk to familiarize you with the locality, usually on the way to your hotel.

Optional Excursions

While we include many sightseeing activities in the price of your vacation, we also offer a range of optional visits and activities both during your trip and in the gateway cities before and after your vacation. Your travel documents include a comprehensive day-by-day itinerary with full details and costs of the optional excursions available. Please note that some optional excursions cannot be paid for by credit card – your Travel Director will advise you. Also note that optional excursions are operated by third parties and Trafalgar accepts no liability. Please remember that all optional excursions are undertaken at your own risk.

Your Hotels

At Trafalgar, we pride ourselves on our superior hotel selection. Our hotels are centrally located and close to major attractions. As we travel from major cities to remote regions, the standards can vary, however, you can rest assured that the hotels we select are the best available.

On certain occasions, for operational or local reasons, it may be necessary to change your hotel accommodations in a particular location. If this does occur, you will be notified of such changes as soon as possible.

Hotel Accommodations

All hotel rooms are clean and well serviced. Each room contains a private bathroom with toilet, shower and/or bath and vanity, as well as television and air-conditioning (some national park lodges and hotels in higher elevation cities may differ).

Rooms may sometimes contain tea and coffee making facilities, mini-bar, room service, STD/ISD phone, radio and in-house movies. Wherever possible, we select establishments that offer additional facilities such as swimming pool, sauna, bars and restaurants. Please refer to the itinerary in your travel wallet for information regarding accommodations at each stop.

Hotel Check-in & Check-out

Arrangements are made to ensure that check-in and check-out at hotels run smoothly, and your Travel Director will advise you in advance of the procedure before arriving at each hotel. On departing the hotel, always remember to return your room key to reception before leaving!

Personal Hotel Expenses

Any additional costs incurred during your stay at the hotels (for example, laundry, telephone calls and bar bills) are your responsibility. Please ensure that your account is settled on the evening before you leave to ensure a smooth and speedy departure the following morning.

Laundry Facilities

When there is a two-night stopover, arrangements can be made for your laundry with hotel housekeeping (at your cost). Please note laundry services are not available at all hotels or on weekends or local holidays.

Your Motor Coach

On applicable itineraries, you will travel on Trafalgar's modern air-conditioned/air-ventilated coaches. Because of the cool climate in Cusco, Puno and Lake Titicaca, coaches may not be air-conditioned.

Porterage

Your coach crew is always there to lend a hand and to liaise closely with hotels to ensure efficient handling of your luggage.

Seat Rotation

Where appropriate, our seat rotation scheme ensures you get to know your fellow traveling companions and enjoy the views from a different vantage point each day.

A Clean Coach

Your driver is responsible for the coach inside and out. Please assist by eating and drinking on board as little as possible.

Smoking

For the comfort of all travelers, smoking is not permitted on board our coaches, but smokers need not worry – frequent comfort and relaxation stops are made along the way.

Alcohol

Alcohol consumption is not permitted on the coach nor in some public places.

Meals

Your vacation price includes full breakfasts daily, but only a limited number of lunches are included on our itineraries. We believe you should be free to spend your time at lunch stops in your own way, maybe trying a local dish or taking a light snack and using the extra time for additional sightseeing or shopping. Occasionally, our daily itinerary may require us to make a lunch stop at a recommended roadside eatery. In certain cities, dinners are not included, giving you an opportunity to dine out on your own, sample regional dishes and eat in typical local restaurants. Your Travel Director will be able to offer advice to help you choose. When not specified on an included meal, drinks are always at your own expense.

Water

It is recommended that you carry with you plenty of drinking water, particularly in the warmer climates. Drinking water varies from region to region and you should check with your Travel Director as to its suitability for consumption.

Tipping

We are confident that by the end of your trip you will have come to appreciate the important role your Travel Director and Coach Driver have played in giving you the best possible vacation experience. If you have been pleased with their services, you may wish to express this satisfaction with a gratuity, as is customary throughout the world. Since this is a matter of a private and individual nature, you should seal your tip in an envelope to present to each of them separately at the end of your vacation.

Suggested tipping rates (per person traveling) for your Trafalgar team in South America and Costa Rica are US\$5 per day for your Travel Director and US\$3 per day for your Coach Driver.

Photography

Bring film, extra batteries and memory cards. Although x-rays used to examine luggage will not damage film on one exposure, it is possible to ask for hand inspection of film and cameras. Depending on the destination, use re-sealable plastic bags to protect camera equipment from dampness. Never leave a camera in a hotel room or elsewhere unattended.

Staying In Touch

Phoning home from hotels can be very expensive since all hotels add a service charge to the cost of any phone calls you make from your room and this charge can be very high. It is always cheaper for you to use public telephones (pay phones). Alternatively, you could use an eKIT phonecard.

What is eKIT?

eKIT is your global phone card and web communication service designed to keep you in touch with family and friends while you're traveling.

eKIT provides:

- Low cost international calls
- Send and receive voice mails
- Free email service
- Send SMS text messages from the web
- An online travel vault for secure storage of important documents (e.g. passport number)
- 24-hour customer service.

For more information check out the Trafalgar eKIT phone card in your travel wallet or go to www.Trafalgar.eKit.com

How do I join?

Use your credit card to set up an account at www.Trafalgar.eKit.com or call 24-hour customer service. Join before you go and receive a Trafalgar eKIT joining bonus!

How do I use it?

Your account number and PIN gives you access to all the phone and web based services. To make a call, simply use the toll-free access numbers for the country you are in, which you will find listed on your eKIT card, or at www.Trafalgar.eKit.com

How long does it last?

eKIT is a rechargeable service – simply recharge your account using your credit card at www.Trafalgar.eKit.com or call their 24-hour customer service. Ask about the monthly recharge bonus.

Is it competitive?

Yes – you may find cheaper phone cards in major cities – but you can only use them in the country of purchase and may not be in a language you understand.

The advantages of eKIT:

- It can be used from 70+ countries.
- You can call over 200 countries.
- You can recharge the card as you travel.
- You can use any balance remaining once you get home.

Emailing Home

Internet cafes are widely available. You can communicate with friends and family for a small charge.

Security

South America and Costa Rica are generally safe and friendly places with people as warm and helpful as any on the globe. In today's world, security is an important consideration while traveling. By using common sense, most unpleasant situations can be avoided. We recommend that you:

- Carry copies of all your important documents in your hand luggage. Include a copy of your passport, credit card numbers and Traveler's Checks, as well as airline tickets and other documents.
- Never accept packages or articles from anyone unknown to you to carry on board an aircraft.
- We recommend you use a hotel security box for valuables, passports, money, etc. as hotels will not accept responsibility for these items left in your room.
- If you plan to use taxis on your own in major cities, contact the front desk of your hotel in order to arrange a secure mode of transportation.
- Stick to areas with a lot of people; however be aware in crowded areas that may tend to attract pickpockets.
- Never leave your luggage and other personal items unattended when in public places such as airports, hotel lobbies and restaurants.
- Carry your valuables in a special money belt or in a bag that you can carry strapped across your front.
- Upon arriving at each hotel, locate the nearest fire exit, directions to which must be posted in each guest room.
- Visit www.tsa.gov for the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) website. There are preparations you can make before you arrive at airports to help you move more quickly and efficiently through security processes.

These recommendations will help you make your Trafalgar vacation as hassle-free as possible. If you are unsure about security while on vacation, your Travel Director will provide you with the best advice.

Public Holidays and Changes

During local or national holidays, certain facilities such as museums, sightseeing tours and shopping may be limited, so we sometimes have to make slight itinerary adjustments. We advise you to check with your travel agent before selecting a departure date so that your enjoyment won't be diminished. Also, local holidays, closing days and other circumstances may change the day of the week that is planned for scheduled meals, sightseeing and other included activities.

Re-routing of Itineraries

Decisions on re-routing itineraries are made just prior to each departure and consideration is given to the conditions prevailing at the time. In transit, if weather or unforeseen circumstances interfere with the itinerary, it is at the discretion of Trafalgar's National Operations Office as to what alternative arrangements are made.

Your Feedback

Your feedback is always welcomed. Towards the end of your trip, your Travel Director will hand out a feedback questionnaire. We ask that you answer the questions, make any relevant comments and hand it back to your Travel Director. The questionnaires are sealed and returned to our Head Office. Every survey is read and a summary of each vacation is given to management, and where necessary, appropriate action is taken to rectify any problems.



Uxmal, Mexico

Argentina

Capital: Buenos Aires

Language: Spanish

Currency: Peso

Population: 37 Million

Time zone: GMT-3

Religion: Roman Catholic

Climate

From the northern subtropical jungle to the southern glaciers, Argentina's climate encompasses it all. Temperatures, however, generally are slightly milder than in equivalent latitudes in the Northern Hemisphere due to weather systems blowing from both the Atlantic and Pacific.

Airport Departure Tax

Approximately US\$29 included in ticket cost.

Manners And Customs

The most common form of greeting between friends is kissing cheeks. Dress is not usually formal, though clothes should be conservative away from the beach. More formal is worn for dinners in restaurants.

Opening And Closing Times

Bank hours are from 10 am to 3 pm on weekdays. Shops in Buenos Aires are open weekdays 9 am to 7 pm and on Saturday from 9 am to 1 pm.

Health

It is strongly recommended that any travellers to Brazil, Argentina and/or Paraguay be inoculated for yellow fever. Additional immunizations may also be required. Certificate of vaccination (original, not a photocopy) may be required upon entry. Travellers should check with consulates, embassies and/or the local health authorities for the latest health requirements.



Nuestra Señora del Pilar Church, Buenos Aires

Tipping

In Spanish, tips are called propinas. Add 10% to 15% in bars and restaurants; 10% may be enough if the total is high. Argentines round up a taxi fare.

Best Buys

Buenos Aires has traditionally enjoyed a reputation as a shopper's paradise, possibly of even being the best shopping city in Latin America. Leather goods are a good buy, as are native crafts and souvenirs.

Electricity

220V, 50Hz.

Internet

Public access is available in internet cafes.

Water

In Buenos Aires, the water is perfectly safe to drink. But if you are traveling to more remote regions of Argentina, it's best to stick with bottled water for drinking.

Food And Drink

Food

North American, Continental and Middle Eastern cuisine is generally available, while local food is largely a mixture of Basque, Spanish and Italian. Beef is of a particularly high quality and meat-eaters should not miss out on the chance to dine at a parrillada, or grill room, where a large variety of barbecue-style dishes can be sampled. Popular local dishes include empanadas (minced meat and other ingredients covered with puff pastry) and locro (pork and maize stew). In general, restaurants are good value.

Drink

Argentine wines are very good and inexpensive. Local distilleries produce their own brands of most well-known spirits. Whiskies and gins are excellent, as are classic and local wines. Caribbean and South American rum adds flavor to cocktails.

Public Facilities

Public facilities are referred to as:

Men caballeros, hombres, varones or señores;

Women damas, mujeres or señoras. It's worth knowing that toilet paper (carry your own), hot water and soap (jabón) are often missing. In bus stations, airports and large shops there is often an attendant who keeps the toilets clean and dispenses toilet paper (papel higienico), sometimes for a small fee, usually US\$0.50.

Embassies And Consulates

Britain

Dr Luis Agote 2412
(1425) Buenos Aires
T 54 11 4808 2200 Switchboard

Canada

Tagle 2828
C1425EEH Buenos Aires
T 54 11 4808 1000

USA

Avenida Colombia 4300,
C1425GMN Buenos Aires, Argentina
T 54 11 5777 4533

Postal Information

Airmail to Europe takes between 5 and 10 days. Surface mail to Europe takes on average 20-25 days but can take as long as 50 days, so it is advisable to send everything airmail. Internal postal services are subject to delay. Post office hours: Mondays to Fridays, 8am to 8pm, Saturdays 8am to 2pm.



LaBoca, Buenos Aires

Brazil

Capital: Brasilia

Language: Portuguese

Currency: Brazilian Real

Population: 189 Million

Time zone: GMT-3

Religion: 70% Roman Catholic

Climate

As most of Brazil lies between the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn, it enjoys a sub-tropical climate. However, temperatures range from the equatorial climate of the Amazon region with its pounding rain to the light snowfalls of the extreme south.

Manners And Customs

Handshaking is customary on meeting and taking one's leave, and normal courtesies are observed. Frequent offers of coffee and tea are customary. Casual wear is normal, particularly during hot weather. In nightclubs smart-casual is acceptable. Smoking is acceptable unless notified otherwise.

Opening And Closing Times

Stores generally open at 9 am and close at 6.30 pm during the week and 1 pm on Saturday. Shopping malls keep longer hours. Banks are open weekdays 10 am to 4.30 pm.

Best Buys

Rio and Bahia specialize in antiques and jewelry. Special purchases include gems (particularly emeralds), jewelry (particularly silver), souvenirs and permissible antiques, leather or snakeskin goods. Fashions and antiques, crystal and pottery are a speciality of São Paulo. Check for restrictions on import to your home country of goods made from skins of protected species.



Copacabana Beach

Tipping

If restaurants add a service charge, it is customary to include an additional 10% of the bill. If no service charge is included, 15% of the bill is appropriate. In good hotels, tip porters 50 centavos per bag.

Electricity

Electric current is 220V, 60C, AC except for Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, which is 110V. Outlets take plugs with two rounded pins. An adaptor and/or converter may be needed to use equipment brought from home.

Internet

Hotels generally provide Internet access to guests at an additional charge. Internet cafes can be found in main towns and cities, and there are often Internet booths at airports.

Health

It is strongly recommended that any travellers to Brazil, Argentina and/or Paraguay be inoculated for yellow fever. Additional immunizations may also be required. Certificate of vaccination (original, not a photocopy) may be required upon entry. Travellers should check with consulates, embassies and/or the local health authorities for the latest health requirements.

Public Facilities

Public toilets are not very common. The words to look for are Banheiro or Sanitário: where they're marked. Cavalheiros means men, Senhoras or Damas, women. It's a good idea to carry some toilet paper with you.

Water

The tap water in Brazil is increasingly safe to drink. However, as a result of the treatment process it still doesn't taste that great and may leave your stomach upset. Drink bottled or filtered water. Ask for agua sem gas for still water and agua com gas for carbonated water.

Food And Drink

Food

Feijoada is the closest Brazil comes to a national dish: a stew of pork, sausage and smoked meat cooked with black beans and garlic, garnished with slices of orange. Eating it is a national ritual at weekends, when restaurants serve feijoada all day.

Drink

The great variety of fruit in Brazil is put to excellent use in sucos – fruit is popped into a liquidizer with sugar and crushed ice to make a deliciously refreshing drink. Made with milk rather than water it becomes a vitamina.

Postal Information

Services are reasonably reliable. Sending mail registered or franked will eliminate the risk of having the stamps steamed off. Airmail service to Europe and the US takes 4 to 6 days. Surface mail takes at least 4 weeks. Post office hours: Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 5pm and Saturdays 9:00am to 12:00pm

Embassies And Consulates

Britain

Praia do Flamengo 284 2º andar,
Caixa Postal 669 CEP 22210-030,
Rio de Janeiro-RJ.
T 55 21 2555 9600

Canada

SES - Av. das Nações
Quadra 803, Lote 16,
70410-900 Brasília DF – Brazil
T 55 61 424 5400

USA

Av. das Nações,
Quadra 801,
Lote 03,
70403-900,
Brasília
T 55 61 312 7000



Das Cataratas, Iguassu Falls

Chile

Capital: Santiago

Language: Spanish

Currency: Chilean peso

Population: 16.5 Million

Time zone: GMT-4

Religion: 89% Roman Catholic

Climate And Clothing

Chile's climate is varied. Desert type weather is usual in the north (hot, dry days and cold nights) except for along the coast where moderating ocean conditions bring a mild climate year-round. Santiago has hot summers, cool springs and falls, and gray, smoggy winters. The Lake District has hot days, cold nights and rainstorms. Farther south in Punta Arenas, summer temperatures seldom reach higher than 68F; winter means snow and icy winds.

Lightweight cottons and linens in northern and central areas. Wet weather wear is advised during rainy seasons. Medium weights and waterproofing are needed in the south.

Documentation U.S.

U.S. citizens require passports valid for six months beyond the intended stay.

Manners And Customs

Handshaking is the customary form of greeting. Normal courtesies should be observed when visiting local people. Informal, conservative clothes are acceptable in most places but women should not wear shorts outside resort areas.

Electricity

The electric current is 220V, 50C, AC.



Rano Raraku Quarry, Easter Island

Opening And Closing Times

Bank hours are weekdays 9 am to 2 pm. Stores generally are open weekdays 10 am to 7 pm and on Saturday until 2 pm.

Best Buys

Special purchases include textiles such as colorful handwoven ponchos, vicuna rugs and copper work. Chilean stones such as lapis lazuli, jade, amethyst, agate and onyx are all good buys.

Food And Drink

Food

Santiago has many international restaurants. The evening will often include floor shows and dancing. Examples of typical national dishes are empanadas (combination of meat, chicken or fish, with onions, eggs, raisins and olives inside a flour pastry), humitas (seasoned corn paste, wrapped in corn husks and boiled), cazuela de ave (soup with rice, vegetables, chicken and herbs), bife a lo pobre (steak with french fries, onions and eggs) and parrillada (selection of meat grilled over hot coals). Seafood is good. Best known are the huge lobsters from Juan Fernández Islands.

Drink

Chile is famous for its wine. Pisco is a powerful liqueur distilled from grapes after wine pressing. Grapes are also used to make the sweet brown chicha as well as aguardiente, similar to brandy. Beer is drunk throughout the day.

Water

The water in Chile is safe to drink. But you will find agua mineral served everywhere, either sin gas (plain) or con gas (carbonated) if you are unsure.

Tipping

The tip in restaurants is 10%, more for superior service. City taxi drivers don't usually expect a tip.

Internet

Hotels generally provide Internet access to guests at an additional charge. Internet cafes can be found in main towns and cities, and there are often Internet booths at airports.

Postal Information

Chilean post offices open from 9am to 6pm Mondays to Fridays and from 9am to 12pm on Saturdays. The postal service operates on a guaranteed delivery system and sending letters to the US and Europe takes approximately two weeks.

Embassies And Consulates

Britain

Avenida El Bosque Norte 0125
Las Condes Santiago, Chile

T 56 2 370 4100

F Admin 56 2 370 4160

British Council 56 2 410 6929

E embsan@britemb.cl

www.ukinchile.fco.gov.uk/es

Canada

Nueva Tajamar 481 – Piso 12,
Torre Norte (Edificio World Trade Center)
Santiago, Chile

T 56 2 362 9660

F 56 2 652 3916

E stago@international.gc.ca

www.canadainternational.gc.ca/chile-chili

USA

v. Andrés Bello 2800

Las Condes,
Santiago, Chile

T 56 2 232 2600

F 56 2 330 3710 / 330 3160

E infousa@state.gov

www.usembassy.cl



Toucan

Costa Rica

Capital: San José

Language: English, Spanish, Castilian

Currency: Costa Rican Colón

Population: 3.8 Million

Time zone: GMT-6

Religion: 85% Roman Catholic 14% Protestant

Climate And Clothing

Costa Rica has many climates, depending on which areas you are visiting. The beaches are tropical - hot during the day and generally humid. The rainforests are hot and humid, but the cloud forests are cool and moist. If you are visiting the mountains, the temperatures may not reach 65 degrees during the day and can be in the high 40s to low 50s at night with plenty of fog.

In the Central Valley, where the capital city, San Jose, is located, temperatures average 78-80 each day with low to moderate humidity. This valley is several thousand feet above sea level, which accounts for the wonderfully moderate temperatures. The sun shines nearly every day, even in the "Green" (rainy) Season. San Jose may well have the best climate in the world.

With this much variance, you must truly plan your clothing as you plan your trip.

When traveling to Costa Rica, it is important to consider that the weather conditions vary according to the geographic area and time of the year. Pack light, comfortable clothing, good walking shoes and sun block. For the "Green" or rainy season, it is recommended you bring a light jacket or raincoat.

Laundry facilities are reasonable in San Jose but are not always available elsewhere in Costa Rica. Please ask at your hotel's reception, and if you are only staying for a short period, please check that your clothes will be ready in time for your departure. Please note that on Sundays and Public Holidays, some hotels do not offer a laundry service.



Water lilies, Costa Rica

Documentation U.S.

U.S. citizens require passports valid for six months beyond the intended stay.

Airport Departure Tax

A departure tax of US\$26.00 per person must be paid either upon arrival or, preferably, upon departure, at the international airport.

Manners And Customs

Handshaking is common and forms of address are important. Christian names are preceded by Don for a man and Doña for a woman. For most occasions casual wear is acceptable, but beachwear should be confined to the beach.

Electricity

Service is the same as in the United States: 110 volts; 60 cycles. European electrical items need an adapter.

Opening And Closing Times

Bank opening hours are generally 8 am to 5 pm during the week and Saturdays from 8 am to 12 pm (noon). In Costa Rica you will not find a bank open on Sundays.

Best Buys

Some of the best buys are to be found in hand-crafted wood or leather items. Hand painted ox-carts, the national symbol of Costa Rica, come in a variety of sizes and colors; and replicas of Pre-Columbian gold artefacts are also available.

Food And Drink

Food

You'll find native dishes such as gallo pinto, a seasoned mix of black beans and rice, and gallos (not to be confused with gallo pinto), open-faced tortillas, topped with beef, chicken or sausage. Other native specialties include heart of palm, tamales, guacamole, ceviche and a vast variety of fresh tropical fruits.

Drink

Guaro, a clear cane liquor, is the national alcoholic drink.

Water

The drinking water is generally considered very safe in San José, and most larger cities and modern resorts. However, precautions should be taken in more remote locations.

Public Facilities

There's no such thing as a public toilet in Costa Rica. You will find restrooms in restaurants, gas stations and some roadside cafes. Bring your own toilet paper, just in case.

Tipping

The tip in restaurants is 10%, more for superior service. City taxi drivers don't usually expect a tip. However, if you hire a taxi for sightseeing, you will want to tip appropriately.

Telephone

IDD is available. Country code: 506. Outgoing international code: 00. Telephone booths are available all over the country.

Internet

There are Internet cafes and some hotels also provide facilities at an additional cost to guests.

Embassies And Consulates

Canada

Apartado Postal: 351-1007
Centro Colón
San José, Costa Rica
T 506 242 4400

USA

Calle 120 Avenida 0
Pavas,
San José, Costa Rica
T 506 220 3939



Monteverde Cloud Forest, Costa Rica

Ecuador & the Galapagos Islands

Capital: Quito

Language: Spanish

Currency: US Dollar

Population: 13.9 Million

Time zone: GMT-5

Religion: 95% Roman Catholic

Climate And Clothing

Although Ecuador is small in size, changes in altitude and the effect of cold ocean currents combine to make virtually any possible climate. The coast has mild temperatures. From June to October highs are in the mid 70's with cool evenings. The rainy season from November to May finds highs of 80 upwards. Due to its high elevation, Quito has cool temperatures year round.

The Galapagos Islands have mild warm weather with a dry windy season from July to September and a rainy season from January to April.

Life on board the ship is very casual. Both long and short sleeve shirts are recommended. Bring along a light jacket or sweater for cool nights and a rain jacket or poncho can be useful. Landings may be 'wet' and two pairs of comfortable walking shoes are recommended. A wide-brimmed sun hat is strongly suggested and don't forget your bathing suit.

Documentation U.S.

U.S. citizens need passports valid for six months beyond the intended stay.

Airport Departure Tax

US\$27.50 to be paid in cash upon checking in for international flights from Guayaquil; US\$31.60 to be paid in cash upon checking in for international flight from Quito.



Garchococa lake, Ecuador

Special Information

Adjustments in the itineraries may be made without prior notice due to changes in National Park policies, weather conditions or season. All changes are made to ensure the safety of passengers and conservation of the islands.

Manners And Customs

Shaking hands is the customary form of greeting. Visitors should follow normal social courtesies and the atmosphere is generally informal. Dress is informal. Life is conducted at a leisurely pace.

Electricity

The current is 110/120V, 60C, AC.

Opening And Closing Times

Shops are open Monday through Friday, generally from 9 am to 1 pm and from 3 pm to 7 pm. There are special business hours for some stores, shopping centers and markets, which may be open Saturday and/or Sunday. Banks open Monday through Friday from 9 am to 1.30 pm.

Best Buys

Ecuador has some of the best and most interesting handicrafts found in Latin America. Among the country's best bargains are the authentic Panama hats and other articles made from straw including fringed shawls, ponchos, embroidered dresses, blouses, jewelry, ceramics and marzipan dolls.

Tipping

A tip of \$6.00 per person per day is expected for the naturalist guide and \$4.00 per person per day for crew. Bar staff should be tipped about \$3.00 per day or 15% of the bill.

Food And Drink

Food

Ecuador is known for its fabulous exotic fruits, high quality fish and seafood, and the countless varieties of bananas. Across the country you'll find a broad spectrum of national and regional dishes. Popular dishes and snacks found in restaurants: choclo (barbecued Andean corn), empanadas (hot, crispy meat or cheese-filled pastries) and llapingachos (potato and cheese pancakes).

Drink

With plenty of exotic fruits come delicious fruit juices (jugos), including naranjilla (a cross between an orange and a tomato), tree tomato, mora (blackberry), guanabana (a luscious thick aromatic sweet white juice), maracuya (passion fruit) and papaya.

Not to be missed is the Andean drink of choice, canelazo (or canelito). This is a popular fiesta drink made of boiled water and naranjilla juice, sugar cane alcohol, sugar and cinnamon.

The wine is mostly imported from Chile and Argentina and expensive. The Ecuadorian Beers are pilsner-style and of decent quality. The most popular brand is Pilsener.

Water

You should drink bottled water only, definitely no water from the tap. Distilled and sparkling waters from Ecuadorian springs are available throughout the country and are of good quality. Tap water is frequently used in ice, so it is better to request the beverages 'sin hielo' (without ice) in restaurants.

Health

Please consult with your own physician or health care provider for any individual needs or questions regarding health and medical matters and/or prescription medications. Please note that access to prescription medications may be limited or unavailable at destinations in South America.



Jungle Hut, Ecuador

Public Facilities

The Ecuadorian plumbing has a very low pressure, therefore always put the toilet paper in the basket by the toilet. Public toilets are limited mainly to terminals, restaurants and gas stations. Lavatories are called "servicios higiénico" and mostly labeled with SS.HH or "baño". Womens' toilets are signed with M (mujeres) or D (damas) and Men's with H (hombre) or C (caballero).

Internet

In big and touristic cities such as Quito, internet cafés are available. Many hotels also provide the Internet service to guests at an additional charge.

Postal Information

Post offices are open Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Letters and postcards to the US take up to two weeks.

Embassies And Consulates

Canada

Av. Amazonas 4153 and
Unión Nacional de Periodistas
Eurocenter Building, Quito, Ecuador
T 593 2 2455 499

USA

Av. Avigiras E12-170
and Eloy Alfaro,
Quito, Ecuador
T 593 2 02 398 5000



Galapagos Turtle

Peru

Capital: Lima	Population: 23 Million
Language: Spanish	Time zone: GMT-5
Currency: Nuevo Sol	Religion: 92% Roman Catholic

Climate And Clothing

June to August is the dry season in the highlands. Many of the major fiestas occur in the wettest months and continue undiminished in spite of heavy rain. The wettest months are December through April, though travelers visit year round since it rarely rains for more than a few hours and there's still plenty of sunshine to enjoy.

Lightweight clothing is recommended during summer with warmer clothes worn in upland areas. Medium weights are advised during cooler months.

Documentation U.S.

U.S. and Canadian citizens need a passport valid for six months beyond the intended stay. U.S. and Canadian citizens do not need a visa for tourist visits up to 90 days.

International Departure Tax

US\$31.00 for international departures, \$6.05 for each domestic flight to be paid in cash after check-in before entering gate area. Subject to change.

Domestic Departure Tax

US\$5.00 from Lima airport, approx US\$5.00 from other national airports. Subject to change.

Machu Picchu Overnight

For the overnight excursion to Machu Picchu, passengers are allowed only one small suitcase per person. Any excess luggage may be stored at the Cusco or Sacred Valley hotels.

Manners And Customs



Machu Picchu

For men greeting men shaking hands is the customary form of greeting. For women it's more common to give one kiss on the cheek. Visitors should follow normal social courtesies and the atmosphere is generally informal. Life is conducted at a leisurely pace.

Electricity

220 volts AC, 60Hz. Both a converter and adapter are needed for U.S. equipment.

Opening And Closing Times

Bank opening hours

Mondays to Fridays, 7 am to 7 pm, Saturdays 7 am to 1 pm. Some banks may open on Sundays in larger cities.

Shopping hours

Most markets and supermarkets will be open on Sunday, too. Time is not guaranteed and rather informal for small shops, they close and open as they want – there are no rules.

Best Buys

There are many attractive Peruvian handicrafts such as alpaca wool sweaters and scarves, alpaca and llama rugs, Indian masks, weaving, jewelry and much more.

Tipping

10% to 15% is sufficient in most restaurants. There is no need to tip taxi drivers.

Food And Drink

Food

The hot and spicy nature of Peruvian food, created by ají and ajo (hot pepper and garlic), has become celebrated at home and abroad. Peruvians enjoy a wide variety of vegetables; there are over 2,000 kinds of indigenous and cultivated potatoes alone. Tropical fruits are abundant. Ceviche is raw fish marinated in lime sauce. Corvina is sea bass, which can be prepared in a variety of ways, and is always an excellent choice. Typical dishes made with scallops (conchitas), mussels (choros), octopus (pulpo) and shrimp (camarones) are plentiful and delicious. Specialities include sopa criolla (spicy soup with beef and noodles), ají de gallina (shredded chicken in a piquant cream sauce). Rice and potatoes accompany virtually every dish. Traditional desserts are alfajores (wafer-thin spirals of shortbread dusted with icing sugar) and served with manjar blanco (a caramel sauce).

Drink

The most famous drink is a pisco sour, made from a potent grape brandy. Chicha de jora (fermented red or yellow corn juice) and chicha morada (non-alcoholic purple corn juice) are popular drinks dating from Inca times. Peruvian beers and national wines are good.

Water

Visitors should drink only bottled water, which is widely available. Do not drink tap water, even in major hotels. Try to avoid drinks with ice. Agua con gas is carbonated; agua sin gas is still.

Health

Altitude sickness may be experienced when visiting Andean destinations, such as Cusco and Lake Titicaca. Upon arrival in a high altitude destination, it is usually helpful to walk slowly, eat lightly, chew cocoa leaves and drink plenty of liquids (non-alcoholic) until acclimated, to prevent symptoms or relieve discomfort.

Public Facilities

Public toilets are rarely available except in railway stations, restaurants, and theaters. Public rest rooms are labeled WC (water closet), Damas (Ladies), and Caballeros or Hombres (Men). Toilet paper is not always provided, and when it is, most establishments request that patrons throw it in the wastebasket rather than the toilet, to avoid clogging.

Telephone

IDD is available. Country code: 51. Outgoing international code: 00. Direct calls are possible from public phones. Telephone cards are available in the main cities. Cellular phones can be rented in Lima and the main cities.

Internet

Hotels generally provide Internet access to guests at an additional charge. Public Internet booths and Internet cafes are widely available in the main cities.

Postal Information

Post offices are open Mondays to Saturdays, 8am to 8pm; some are also open Sunday from 9am to 1pm. Letters and postcards to the US take up to two weeks.

Embassies And Consulates

Canada

Bolognesi 228, Miraflores
Lima 18, Peru

Mailing Address

Casilla 18-1126
Correo Miraflores
Lima, Perú

T 51 1 319-3200

F 51 1 446 4776 (Trade and Public Affairs)

51 1 446 4912 (Administration)

51 1 446 4775 (Immigration)

51 1 446 4949 (Political)

51 1 446 4985 (CIDA)

E lima@international.gc.ca

USA

Avenida La Encalada cdra.
17 s/n Surco, Lima 33,
Peru

T 51 1 618 2000

F 51 1 618 2397

Opening hours Monday - Friday 7:30 am – 5:00 pm
Closed on American and Peruvian Holidays



Lake Titicaca, Peru

NB At the time of creation the information in this document was correct. However, it is subject to change without notice.