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FOUR WAYS TO ENRICH YOUR LIFE IN PERU



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To say that [Peru](#) has a wealth of adventures and experiences for travellers would be an understatement. Whether it's biodiversity, gastronomy, adventure or culture, the South American country – home to everything from the Incas and the Amazon to fabulous fiestas and pisco sours – tops any travel hit list, says writer Ross Clarke

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1 Natural splendour

From north to south, coast to mountains, Peru bursts with biodiversity. To give just a flavour of its natural riches, the country has more birds than North America and Europe combined, with more than 1,800 bird species (107 of which are endemic) making it a true paradise for birdwatching. And of course, it would be remiss not to mention the powerful and life-giving Amazon River that flows some 3,713km through the Peruvian lowland jungle. This impressive and important ecosystem gives life to everything from dolphins to jaguars, turtles to monkeys. The best way to experience it for yourself is to take to the water with a river cruise from Iquitos or Nauta.

Pictured: Amazon River Cruise, Loreto © Jungle Experiences





2 Cultural highlights

No trip to Peru would be complete without learning about and experiencing Incan culture. And while most first-time visitors will head for the mysterious and famous Machu Picchu, its 'sister' city Choquequirao is equally as enthralling and Instagram-worthy. This archaeological complex lies above the Apurimac River on a hilltop and is thought to have been both a cultural and religious centre. Its strategic positioning on the river and jungle edge would also have made it a prime spot to connect the empire. Book onto a tour of the site to learn about Incan life and how Choquequirao was used as a refuge from the invading conquerors, and to see the ingenious irrigation systems, terraces, rooms and temples.

Pictured: Choquequirao, Cusco © Leonel Ortiz / PromPerú



3 Thrilling adventures

Thanks to its long coastline and diverse inland terrain, Peru offers the full range of outdoor pursuits from hiking and mountaineering to surfing and kayaking. With lofty archaeological sites such as Choquequirao and Machu Picchu, hiking and trekking is all part of the experience. Setting off from Capuliyoc, you can expect a four-day hike to see the wonders of Choquequirao. There will be plenty of breathtaking sights along the way: vistas of epic Andean valleys, vertiginous canyons and glimpses of deer, spectacled bears, condors and hummingbirds. With a wealth of indigenous flora too, the trail is

perfect for dotany burrs. If coastal and water pursuits are more your cup or *mate*, you won't be disappointed either. Try your hand – and legs – at rafting the Vilcanota River, or kayaking the Piuray Lagoon near Cusco.

Pictured: Choquequirao Trek, Cusco © J. Vallejo / PromPerú



4 Gastronomic delights

In the past decade, Peru has won the title of World's Leading Culinary Destination four times. It is also home to three of the World's 50 Best Restaurants, so it's no surprise that the country draws gourmands from far and wide. Take celebrated [Central](#) in Lima's Barranco District, for example, led by Virgilio Martínez – star of Netflix's *Chef's Table*. The intriguing menu champions typical Peruvian ingredients (potatoes, corn, quinoa) and traditional cooking methods such as *huatia* – baking in a soil oven. [Mó Bistro](#) in Miraflores is another place leading the way in the capital when it comes to sustainable practices and championing local produce. Stop by for brunch and enjoy organic eggs, and quite possibly the best French toast in town.

Pictured: Central Restaurant, Lima © Ernesto Benavides / PromPerú

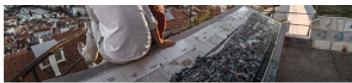
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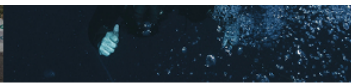




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