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# The Power of Diversity

The spirit of Peruvian Man, sculpted by art and religion, has given rise to a creative vein which crops up in an endless variety of shapes, rhythms and rituals. Year after year, more than 3.000 folk festivals, 1.500 musical styles and countless arts and crafts confirm that Peru is home to one of the most varied folk legacies on Earth.

With this outpouring of artistic expression, Peruvians feed on their deep-lying roots to project a timeless alliance with nature and through rhythms and colors, strengthen their commitment to life and extend to visitors the hospitality and reciprocity that are so typical of Peruvian culture. The many festivals, even those of a religious nature, reveal the joyous nature of Peruvians, both men and women, their inclination to be sociable and share their hopes.

Although they were not always separated from day-to-day life and work, these festivals are rooted at the present, marked by an overflowing sensuality, the overwhelming outpouring of religious faith, and the need to interpret in a creative way the temporary reversal of order that breathes new life into the cohesion of Peruvian communities. Today, the festivals echo to the strains of wind and percussion instruments, some of which date from pre-Inca times and some which have been created more recently. There are also dances ranging from the traditional –like the marinera and the huayno– to more modern rhythms –such as creole waltz and chicha.

This capacity for musical fusion is the most striking affirmation of a culture that does not admit excluding purisms, one which forges a common identity out of a multi-cultural reality filled with differences.

In Peru these differences, and the living history in which all of them converge, open up a multitude of creative possibilities that take shape in the form of objects made for daily use or destined for sacred rituals. Artisans threw all their expressive force into an ample repertoire of pottery, textiles, images, carvings, jewelry and all sorts of arts and crafts that are typical of Peru, such as the Sarhua boards or the San Marcos retablos. Like most Peruvian folk art, their work reveals an essential commitment to fertility, abundance and life itself.

## FESTIVITIES IN PERU

Peru holds around 3.000 folk festivals every year. This guide takes a look at a selection of 34 festivals chosen for their tourist popularity, geographic reach, cultural importance and unique character.

Most of them are dedicated to a patron saint, falling within the Christian calendar imposed during the Vice-regency, after having been carefully adapted to the magical and religious beliefs of a particular region.

Apart from these religious festivals, Peru hosts other celebrations that are exclusively pagan, such as those linked to time-honored myths in jungle native communities and the countless festivals created over the past few centuries or decades. More over, on the same day of the celebration, migrants from 4.000 regional clubs hold urban versions of the same festivals that they celebrate in their home towns.

A traditional Peruvian festival is, by nature, a space where all things both sacred and profane come together in a single manifestation of pride, vitality and sheer joy.

The Christian rite that is manifestly visible –above all in the highlands– is superimposed on the pre-Hispanic tradition of taki (singing and dancing in the Quechua language) dedicated to pagan gods that are reborn every year in the guise of Occidental saints.

The celebrations go hand-in-hand with a busy program of activities that include Mass, processions, pilgrimages, dancing, banquets, arts and crafts shows and agricultural fairs, folk dances and other shows that blend sensuality and spirituality, the circular order and temporary chaos as well as the past and the future.

Peru's festivals form a richly colored tapestry aimed at reinventing history and producing a celebratory synthesis of Man and Mother Earth.

## FESTIVITIES CALENDAR

### JANUARY

**1**
**Cuzco**
**Entrega de Varas**
**The power of a scepter**

At the start of every year, the elders of each community in the area (the yayas) come together to designate the candidates who are to become the highest authorities of their villages: the Varayocs. In a festival that features gallons of chicha (maize beer) and llonque (sugarcane alcohol), the mayor or Varayoc receives the scepter or vara that symbolizes his power. This pre-Hispanic custom has been glossed over with Occidental formalities. The varas are crafted from local wood varieties such as chonta palm, black hualtaco, huallacán or membrillo, measure around a meter in length and are inlaid with gold and silver (Cuzco's Town Hall features a small museum that exhibits some superb examples). When a Varayoc steps down from his post, he ceases to hold any post in his community ever again, and becomes one of the venerable elders.

**20**
**Canas (Cuzco)**
**Chiaraje**
**Ritual battle**

The tradition of staging ritual battles to ensure the fertility of the land lives on in a remote part of the department of Cuzco. The Pampa del Chiaraje, at an altitude of 4.700 meters above sea level, in the province of Canas, can be reached by a paved road from the old Inca capital and then via a dirt road. Here, every year the peaceful villagers of Checcas, Langui and Layo stage an impressive battle. Armed with hardened lambswool slings, leather whips and waistcoats decorated with flowers, young warriors taunt each other in the mist or amidst pelting hailstorms. This is pucllay, or war games, where the name of the game is to control as much territory as possible and force the enemy to retreat.

**20**
**Trujillo (La Libertad)**
**Marinera Dance Festival**
**Courting with a handkerchief**

The marinera is one of the most elegant dances in Peru. The dance involves a great deal of flirting between a couple, who each twitch a handkerchief in their right hand, while keeping the beat during what is fairly complex choreography. Dance steps, characteristic of the marinera include the coqueteo (with the couple dancing very closely together) and the skillful cepillado footwork (literally "brushing"). The daring marinera, danced in the department of La Libertad, features the man wearing a wide-brimmed hat and poncho and the lady dressed in an intricate Moche lace dress. From January 20-30, the Gran Chimú stadium in the city of Trujillo holds the country's most important marinera festival. This competition, that draws couples from all over the country, is organized by the Club Libertad. During the festival, the city also hosts processions involving floats, and the whole town takes on a festive air. The people of Trujillo gather at the main square to dance and celebrate.

### FEBRUARY

**1-14**
**Puno**
**Virgen de la Candelaria**
**Faith in the folk capital of the Americas**

**F**or 18 days, the highland town of Puno, nestled on the shores of Lake Titicaca at an altitude of 3.870 meters above sea level, is becomes the Folk Capital of the Americas. The festival gathers more than 200 groups of musicians and dancers to celebrate the Mamacha Candelaria. For the first nine days, the mayordomos (those in charge of organizing the festivities), decorate the church and pay for Mass, banquets and fireworks displays. On the main day, February 2, the virgin is led through the city in a colorful procession comprising priests, altar boys, the faithful, Christians and pagans carefully maintaining the hierarchy. This is the moment when the troupes of musicians and dancers take the scene, per-

*Festival of the Virgin of the Candlestick, Puno*
*PromPerú*

forming and dancing throughout the city. The festival is linked to the pre-Hispanic agricultural cycles of sowing and harvesting, as well as mining activities in the region. It is the result of a blend of respectful Aymara gaiety and ancestral Quechua seriousness. The dance of the demons, or diablada, the main dance of the festival, was allegedly dreamed up by a group of miners trapped down a mine who, in their desperation, resigned their souls to the Virgen de la Candelaria. The dancers, blowing zampoña panpipes and clad in spectacular costumes and outlandish masks, make their offerings to the earth goddess Pachamama. The most impressive masks, for their terrifying aspect, are those of the deer fitted with long twisted horns similar to the Devil, and Jacancho, the god of minerals. During the farewell, or cacharpari, the dancers who fill the streets finally head to the cemetery to render homage to the dead.

**27-30**
**Quico (Cusco)**
**Tinca de Vacas**
**Branding the property of one and all**

This festival, which is linked to the Apostle Santiago (St. James), culminates in cattle-branding. This ceremony, celebrated only by families who own livestock, invite visitors to eat beef or llama meat and drink chicha. The festival is hosted in the community of Quico, located at 4.800 meters above sea level. Access, via the Urcos-Quince Mil track (on muleback), is tough but worth the effort.

**FEBRUARY-MARCH**
**2nd half of February-1st week of March**
**Pan-Peruvian**
**Carnivals**
**The festival of joy**

Peruvian carnivals are marked by the festive character of Andean areas, which regularly break with their solemn traditions. Beyond regional variations, a common characteristic of nearly the entire highland chain is the ritual of the yunza, called umisha in the jungle and cortamonte on the coast. It involves artificially planting a tree trunk laden with gifts, around which the guests dance until it is chopped with a machete or an ax. The couple who make the final hack that brings down the tree will then both be in charge of organizing the yunza next year. Peruvians across the country are extremely fond of tossing buckets of water at each other during this festival, so onlookers would be wise to take precautions. Cities where carnivals reach a high point include Cajamarca and Puno.

**MARCH**
**1st week**
**Cañete (Lima)**
**Lunahuaná Adventure Sports Festival**
**A week of adventure**

The pleasant valley of Lunahuaná, a paradise for adventure sports lovers, is just half an hour from San Vicente de Cañete, a town 150 km south of Lima. The main attraction is the fast-running Cañete River, which features rapids up to Class IV. Each year, the valley hosts a festival involving rafting, parasailing, trekking, gliding, mountain biking and fishing competitions. A visit to Lunahuaná is a first-rate excuse to take in the nearby archaeological site of Incahuasi and the hanging bridge of Catapalla. Other attractions include wine-tasting at local vineyards and the exotic regional cuisine, such as conejos a la carapulcra (spicy jugged hare) and cuy al vino (guinea pig braised in wine).

2nd week
Ica
Wine Festival
A miracle in the desert

This festival is a celebration of the abundance of grapes and wine in the region of Ica (a four-hour drive south of Lima), where persevering efforts in local vineyards have spread greenery across vast tracts of once bone-dry desert. The Wine Festival (Festival de la Vendimia) involves fairs, competitions, processions of floats, musical festivals and parties where guests dance the Afro-Peruvian festejo. One of the major attractions of the event is the Queen of the Wine Festival beauty pageant. Accompanied by her hand-maidens, the beauty queen treads grapes in a vat in the time-honored tradition to extract the juice that will eventually be fermented. Apart from the delicious local sweets known as tejas, made from pecans or candied fruits, filled with caramel and covered with sugar icing, those attending the event can try pisco, the aromatic and tasty grape brandy that originated in this part of southern Peru four centuries ago.

**2nd half of March-1st week of April**
**Porcón (Cajamarca)**
**Cruces de Porcón**
**The symmetry of faith**

Weaving through the early mists that still shroud the highlands just before dawn, an impressive procession of huge, colorful wooden crosses progresses down the valley of Porcón to celebrate the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem. Unlike other Easter Week celebrations, the one in this fun-loving village located half an hour by road from the city of Cajamarca does not dwell on the death of Christ. On the main day of the festival, Palm Sunday, four different ceremonies are held: the crowning of the crosses, the greeting of the Lord at the home of the mayordomo (the person in charge of organizing the festivities), the various responses sung in Quechua and Latin, and finally the procession to the plantation chapel. The crosses are decorated with round and oval-shaped mirrors symbolizing the souls of the dead, as well as figures representing the Virgin Mary, the Heart of Jesus and a wealth of symmetrically placed patron saints forming a huge rhomboid. The locals hang metal bells from the corners to announce the arrival of the crosses to the community. During the imposing procession of the crosses, angels dressed out in turquoise, yellow and pink, stride ahead, hanging onto the señorca, the donkey carrying the Lord of the Palms.

**MARCH-APRIL**
**2nd half of March-1st week of April**
**Ayacucho**
**Easter Week**
**The fervor of Ayacucho**

Easter week represents the peak of religious sentiment for the people of the Andes. The departmental capital of Ayacucho, San Cristóbal de Huamanga, located in the central Andes at an altitude of 2.761 meters above sea level, celebrates one of the most intense portrayals of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ. The week starts out with the entry of Jesus into the city riding on a donkey. On Wednesday, the images of the Virgin Mary and Saint John are paraded in fervent processions through streets carpeted with flower petals until they meet up with the litter bearing the image of Christ, whom they "greet" in the main square. On the evening of Holy Friday, the lights of the city wink out to give way to the Christ of Calvary. The image sets out from the Monastery of Santa Clara in a procession through the streets on a litter strewn with white roses, followed by the grieving Virgin Mary and lines of men and women strictly dressed in mourning bearing lit candles. The litter, which features thousands of white candles, is simply magnificent. The litter is then accompanied with prayers and songs throughout the night until the three-hour sermon is delivered on Saturday. After days of grieving, Resurrection Sunday takes on a festive air, Christ is resurrected and appears once more on his litter and is carried through the streets.

**2nd half of March-1st week of April**
**Cuzco**
**Lord of the Earthquakes**
**The Black Christ and the Carmesí flower**

Ever since 1.650, when the faithful claim that an oil painting of Christ on the Cross held off a devastating earthquake that was rattling the city of Cuzco, the locals have been rendering homage to the image of Taitacha Temblores, the Lord of the Earthquakes. The celebration is held on Easter Monday against the backdrop of Easter Week in the city of Cuzco. This celebration is of particular interest because it allows onlookers to get a glimpse of the fusion of Andean religions and Christianity. The Cuzco Cathedral, where the image is kept, is built on the foundations of the ancient temple dedicated to the pagan god Apulla Tikse Wiracocha. The image of the Lord of Earthquakes is borne aloft in a procession through the streets of the city just as the Incas used to parade the mummies of their chieftains, high priests and supreme rulers. In the end, the dominating part of the celebration involves the ñucchu flower (salvia esplendes), used as an offering to the ancient gods Kon and Wiracocha. The same flower today is used to weave a crown for the Lord of the Earthquakes. This crimson colored flower, whose petals are scattered by the faithful over the venerated image, symbolizes the blood of Christ. The image used today was donated by King Charles V, and despite centuries of smoke from the candles and incense, no one has dared to restore the blackened painting, that has given the Christ a somber aspect and a dark countenance.

**APRIL**
**15-20**
**Pachacámac (Lima)**
**Peruvian Paso Horse Festival**
**The dance of the stallions**

The Spanish horse, bred with the Arab stallion and reared in a desert environment, which formed its gait, gave rise to the Peruvian Paso horse. For 300 years, the blood of this new breed

was improved upon until the Paso horse developed the characteristics that have made it one of the world's most beautiful and elegant breeds. Breeders, chalán riders and artisans, over the years, have worked on the art of ambladura –the synchronized gait of the fore and hindlegs– which in turn gave rise to the elegant steps and dress of the marinera. The entire costume comprises the saddle and trimmings and the splendid outfit of the chalán himself (white shirt and trousers, wide-brimmed straw hat, vicuña wool poncho, handkerchief, boots and spurs). This tradition, which has been exported all over the world, has been spurred on by a number of competitions both along the Peruvian coast as well as in the highlands. The most important competition, however, is the National El Paso Horse Competition held every year at the Mamacona stables near Pachacámac, located 30 km south of Lima.

**MAY**
**1**
**Chapi (Arequipa)**
**Virgen de Chapi**
**The stationary Virgin**

Every year, thousands of pilgrims cross the desert from the city of Arequipa to the sanctuary of Chapi to worship the image of the Virgin of Purification, today known as the Virgen de Chapi. In 1790, the parish priest of Pocsi, Juan de Dios José Tamayo, tried to move the small image to another community and failed, reportedly because the statue suddenly became too heavy to move. News of the miracle spread like wildfire, and today the faithful take around 15 hours to walk 45 km through the night, leaning on rustic walking staffs to reach the deserted spot located at 2.420 meters above sea level. Before the first stop, the pilgrims gather stones of varying sizes which they will leave at Tres Cruces next to the road, forming the so-called apachetas which symbolize the weariness and sins that the faithful leave behind them. The same thing occurs at Alto de Hornilla and then at Siete Toldos, 15 km from the spot, with countless candles flickering in the night. The following day, in Chapi, the virgin is borne aloft in a procession over carpets of flower petals. At night, next to the sanctuary, pilgrims set off fireworks and sell foodstuffs.

**3**
**Acobamba (Junín)**
**Señor de Muruhuay**
**The stone face of Christ**

*Chonguinada Dance, Junin*
*Aníbal Solimano / PromPerú*

Left to their fate by officials of the vice-regency, those sick with smallpox (muru: smallpox, huay: house) were allegedly healed by an image of Christ that took shape on a stone slab at the foot of Mount Shalacoto (2.959 meters above sea level), and has remained there ever since. This spot, located in the district of Acobamba, 12 km from the town of Tarma in the department of Junín, is Peru's foremost pilgrimage center. The celebration of this image abounds in pre-Hispanic rites dominated by elements such as water, earth and stone. Today, the worship rituals begin the night before with a fireworks display. On the main day, after a Mass held in Quechua, the devout deposit a "letter to God". Then everyone returns to Tarma in a procession headed by the mayordomo (the organizer of the festivities), his wife and troupes of dancers including the caracolillos and negritos, who compete in dances such as the abrecalle and the chutos. After the dancing, everyone settles down to lunch featuring typical Andean dishes such as fried guinea pig served with peanuts and beans. Over the following days, the locals dance the famous chonguinada in the streets of Acobamba, that have been carpeted in flower petals.

**3**
**Lima, Apurímac, Ayacucho,**
**Junín, Ica, Cuzco**
**Festival of the Crosses**
**Catholic crosses, Andean spirits**

This festival, which is widespread in the highlands, is organized by the members of each community who decorate their respective crosses and prepare then for the procession to neighboring churches. The celebration is linked to giving thanks for bountiful harvests, a custom maintained by peasant farmers since the pre-Hispanic era. The festival often features folk music shows

involving danzantes de tijeras (scissors dancers). In ancient times, the danzaq or scissors dancers would perform their daring feats on top of the church belltowers. Even today, the dancers strive to outdo each other, performing extraordinary feats of derring-do.

**1st week**
**Quispicanchis (Cuzco)**
**Qoyllur Rit'i**
**The greatest indigenous pilgrimage in the Americas**

Each year the people of the district of Ocongate (Quispicanchis) perform a ritual whose external aspect appears to be the image of Christ, but whose real objective is to bring Man closer to Nature. The ritual, associated with the fertility of the land and the worship of Apus, the spirits of the mountains, forms part of the greatest festival of native Indian nations in the hemisphere: Qoyllur Rit'i. The main ceremony is held at the foot of Mount Ausangate, at 4.700 meters, where temperatures often plunge below freezing. The ritual brings thousands of pilgrims, including shepherds, traders and the merely curious who gather at the shrine at Sinakara. Popular belief has it that the infant Christ, dressed as a shepherd, appeared to a young highland Indian boy, Marianito Mayta, and they quickly became friends. When Mayta's parents found them dressed in rich tunics, they informed the local parish priest, Pedro de Landa, who attempted in vain to capture the infant Christ who had disappeared and left behind only a stone. Marianito died immediately, and the image of the Lord of Qoyllur Rit'i appeared on the stone. Today, the festival starts off with the day of the Holy Trinity, when more than 10.000 pilgrims climb to the snowline, accompanied by all sorts of dancers in full costume (chauchos, qollas, pabluchas or ukukus) portray various mythical characters. The ukukus, or bears, are the guardians of the Lord and the Apu mountain spirits and apachetas, stone cairns built along the way by pilgrims to atone for their sins. The ukukus maintain order during religious ceremonies. A group of hefty queros, members of what is probably Peru's purest Quechua community, dress up as pabluchas and set out for the mountaintop, at 6.362 meters in search of the Snow Star which is reputedly buried within the mountain. On their way back down to their communities, they haul massive blocks of ice on their backs for the symbolic irrigation of their lands with holy water from the Ausangate.

**JUNE**
**24**
**Cuzco**
**Inti Raymi**
**The Inca festival of the Sun**

The Winter Solstice in the southern hemisphere and the local harvests are the driving force behind the greatest, most majestic pre-Hispanic ceremony to render homage to the sun. Today, the Inti Raymi festival evokes the splendid Inca ritual of yore, being carefully scripted by Cuzco professors, archaeologists and historians. The central event is acted out on the esplanade below the imposing fortress of Sacsayhuamán, 2 km outside the city of Cuzco, easily reached by car or on foot. There, step by step, thousands of actors enact a long ceremony giving thanks to the sun god, Inti. The Inca ruler is borne on a royal litter from the Koricancha, or Temple of the Sun to the Huacaypata, the city's main square, where he commands the local authorities to govern fairly. Then all the participants set out for Sacsayhuamán, where the ceremony calls for the sacrifice of two llamas, one black and one white. The llamas' entrails and fat are handed to a pair of high priests: the first, the Callpa Ricuy, examines the intestines to predict what sort of year lies ahead; while the second priest, the Wupariruj, makes his predictions based on the smoke that wafts up from the burning fat. The high priests' predictions are then interpreted by the Willac Umo, the lord high priest, who bears the news to the Inca. Finally, at sunset, the Inca orders all to withdraw from the site, and the entire city breaks out into a festivities that will rage for several days.

**24**
**Cuzco, Loreto, San Martín, Ucayali**
**San Juan**
**Fertility and sensuality**

In the jungle, Saint John the Baptist has taken on a major symbolic significance because of the importance of water as a vital element in the entire Amazon region. This is why June 24 (St. John's the Baptist's day) is the most important date on the festival calendar in the entire Peruvian jungle. The northeastern city of Iquitos hosts a variety of festivals and public events: fiestas with typical local bands where cooks dish up some of the regional cuisine, featuring tacacho (baked banana) and juanes (rice pastries), named after the patron saint, San Juan Bautista. This carni-

val atmosphere, redolent with the warmth of the local hospitality, has given rise to the myth of a special sensuality to be found in Loreto. It is widely held that the best aphrodisiacs are concocted in Iquitos, potions blended from fruits and herbs steeped in sugarcane alcohol, with strange and suggestive names. The best-known is without a doubt the chuchuhuasi, fermented from a local root. In the highlands, the festival is also linked to the concept of fertility, but here the main theme is livestock, something that is easily associated with the image of Saint John as the pastor of souls. On this day, livestock are counted and branded, and llamas are sometimes even the object of prayer. In Cuzco, where peasant farmers used to bring their richly decorated sheep to Mass, the tradition has been shifted to June 25, yielding to Inti Raymi.

**29**
**Chorrillos and Lurín (Lima), San José (Lambayeque)**
**Saint Peter and Saint Paul**
**(San Pedro & San Pablo)**
**Patron saints of fishermen and farmers**

Together with the communal task of dredging irrigation ditches, highland communities celebrate a veritable water festival. On the coast, fishing communities have chosen Saint Peter as their patron saint, and render him homage in Lima's fishing districts of Chorrillos and Lurín, as well as in San José, located 13 km north of the city of Chiclayo. The ceremony is held by the mouth of the Lambayeque River, where legend has it the founding god Naylamp landed on Peruvian shores. The figure of the saint is borne aloft amidst burning incense, prayers and hymns down to the sea where it boards a fishing launch and is taken around the bay to bless the waters in the hope of a good fishing season.

**Movable feast**
**Cuzco**
**Corpus Christi**
**The procession of saints and virgins**

The festival of Corpus Christi has been celebrated all over Peru since colonial times, but reaches a high point in Cuzco. Fifteen saints and virgins from various districts are borne in a procession to the Cathedral where they "greet" the body of Christ embodied in the Sacred Host, kept in a fabulous gold goblet weighing 26 kilos and standing 1,2 meters high. Sixty days after Easter Sunday, the members of each nearby church bear their patron saint in a procession to the chimes of the María Angola, Peru's largest church bell, forged in a copper-gold alloy in the sixteenth century by local artisan Diego Arias de Cerda. At night everyone gathers together, for an overnight vigil, where typical dishes such as chiriuchu (spicy guinea pig), beer, chicha and cornbread are served. At dawn the procession sets off around the main square, bearing the images of five virgins clad in richly embroidered tunics, plus the images of four saints: Sebastian, Blas, Joseph and the Apostle Santiago (Saint James) mounted on a beautiful white horse. Then the saints enter the Cathedral to receive homage, time after which representatives and authorities from various communities of Cuzco meet in the main square to discuss local affairs. Finally, the delegations return to the churches amidst hymns and prayers.

**JULY**
**2nd week (15-16)**
**Paucartambo (Cuzco)**
**Virgen del Carmen**
**Mamacha Carmen**

Four hours from Cuzco, in the town of Paucartambo, thousands of devotees hold festivals in honor of the Virgen del Carmen, known locally as Mamacha Carmen, patron saint of the mestizo population. The gathering, that raises the curtain on these days of celebrations is held in the main square, where troupes of musicians play their instruments while richly dressed choirs sing in Quechua. The setting gives way to a series of ingenious choreographies that portray events in Peruvian history. For five days, dance companies in various costumes (Doctorcitos, Waca Waca, Sarjas) take to the streets to accompany the Mamacha throughout the entire procession through the main square, the church and the city streets. On the main day, the virgin is borne aloft in a procession to bless those present and scare away demons. The dancers take to the housetops, performing daring gymnastics, showing off their colorful Inca and colonial garb. At the end of the procession, war is waged on the demons, from which the faithful emerge in triumph. Finally, the gathering ends up in the cemetery to render homage to the souls of the dead.

**28-29**
**Pan-Peruvian**
**Independence Day**
**Peru, free and independent**

Across the country, Peruvians throw parties and hold patriotic celebrations to remember the Declaration of Peru's Independence (July 28, 1821) by the Libertador José de San Martín. In Lima and cities across Peru, even in remote communities, homes fly the Peruvian flag from the start of July. On the night of July 27, Peruvians often stage serenatas to the strains of folk and Creole music in plazas and public parks. Dawn on July 28 is greeted with a salvo of 21 cannons, to herald the ceremony of raising the flag. On the following day, before the famous military parade is held in downtown Lima, the Te Deum ceremony, attended by the president, is celebrated in the Lima Cathedral. In various parts of the country, Peruvians also hold agricultural and livestock fairs (Cajamarca, Piura, Monsefú) together with three festivals that are the soul of Creole culture: cockfighting, bullfighting and Peruvian paso horse exhibitions.

**26-30**
**Cotabambas (Apurímac)**
**Yawar Fiesta**
**The struggle between the bull and the condor**

In the village of Ccollurqui, in the province of Cotabambas, Apurímac, an eight-hour drive from the city of Abancay up a dirt road, the locals celebrate Independence Day with a bullfight whose symbolic characteristics have turned it into a ritual. Taking part are a bull and a condor, portraying the Spanish and Andean worlds, respectively. Once the condor has been trapped, it is lashed to the bull's back, which the bird pecks at savagely in a bid to free itself. At the same time, the bull is released in the ring and surrounded by spontaneous bullfighterswho fend off the animal with their ponchos. The bull, maddened with pain, leaps into the air trying to rid itself of the condor. Finally, when the bull has been overcome –and it usually is– the condor is set free amidst music and general rejoicing. If the condor is badly wounded, or dies, it is taken as an omen for the village. At night, dancers take to the streets, fireworks are set off and the villagers stage a torchlit procession.

**AUGUST**
**30**
**City of Lima and Quives (Lima), Ocopa (Junín) and Arequipa**
**Santa Rosa de Lima**
**Patron Saint of the Americas and the Philippines**

Saint Rose of Lima (Santa Rosa de Lima) was the name given to a seventeenth-century inhabitant of Lima. Isabel Flores de Oliva felt a great religious vocation and dedicated herself to being a laywoman, without belonging to any religious order in particular. She was to spend her life caring for the sick and her penitence undertaken to resist sin, as well as her good nature earned her fame even while she was alive. Veneration of her figure spread not only in Peru but also to the Philippines. Her shrine, located in downtown Lima, is constantly visited by pilgrims in search of a miracle, especially those seeking to cure an illness. On August 30, pilgrims often cast letters detailing their needs into the wishing well where Saint Rose dropped the key from her cilice. Others visit the hermitage that the saint herself built. Saint Rose is the patron saint of Peru. Although her festival is celebrated across the country, it has a special Quechua emphasis in the town of Santa Rosa de Quives, in the highlands of the department of Lima.

**SEPTEMBER**
**6-10**
**Andahuaylas (Apurímac)**
**Virgen de Cocharcas**
**The traveling Virgin**

The Virgen de Cocharcas is a carved replica commissioned in 1598 by Sebastián Quimichi, one of the local faithful. Born in San Pedro de Cocharcas, Quimichi had the figure made to show gratitude for miracles granted by the Virgin of Copacabana, in Bolivia. The festival is organized by the virgin's local followers, known as quimichos (from Quimichi), who bear the figure aloft on a procession through the streets of the district of Cocharcas, in Andahuaylas. Other replicas of the same image are led in pilgrimage to other cities outside of the department of Apurímac. These pilgrimages, toward the cities of Cusco and Huamanga (Ayacucho), are carried out amid songs, music and prayers, after the crops. She is known as the Traveling Virgin and is associated with the rains and the fertility of the earth.

**Final week**
**Trujillo (La Libertad)**
**International Spring Festival**
**Evergreen**

The festival of spring is celebrated all over Peru, with especially colorful variants in the jungle. However Trujillo, capital of the department of

La Libertad, has forged a particular reputation for holding the festival of greatest splendor. The festival is intimately linked to the marinera norteña, which is always danced by a couple, waving a handkerchief in the air to keep time. The festival features various tournaments demonstrating the regional variations of this dance. During the week-long festival, streets and homes fill with decorations, floats are paraded through the city, and troupes of schoolchildren dance through the streets, led by the beauty queen of the spring pageant. The beauty queen is always flanked by drum majorettes who travel here from all over the world to show off their skills.

**OCTOBER**
**4**
**Lima, Ancash, Apurímac, Arequipa and Cuzco**
**Virgen del Rosario**
**Moors vs. Christians**

The Virgen del Rosario is the patron saint of the Dominican Order, who were in charge of the slave brotherhoods in colonial times. This is why the image of the saint is often accompanied by an icon featuring the letter "S" pinned on by a nail, symbolizing the black slaves. Worship of the saint dates back to 1536, and the festival is celebrated all over Peru. On the first Sunday of October, in Cajatambo, in the highlands of the department of Lima, the locals hold an agricultural fair, bullfights, marinera competitions and a procession featuring Los Diablos (demons) as the main dance act. In the district of Urcos, in the province of Quispicanchis, as well as in Combate and Checaupe, in the province of Canchis, department of Cuzco, locals celebrate the date with processions, bullfights and pachamancas, a dish prepared in underground pits and cooked over hot stones. The center of all Virgen del Rosario celebrations however is the northern Andean department of Ancash. The celebrations are highlighted by the presence of pallas, ladies dressed in costumes with wide sleeves and tall crowns of flowers, and the famous negritos, dancers dressed in black wool masks who liven up the celebration. This festival features a symbolic confrontation between the Moors, locals dressed in Andean costume, and the Christians, who are dressed in Spanish outfits harking back to colonial times. The battle ends when the Moorish kings, having been vanquished and taken prisoner, repent and beg to be converted to Christianity. As dusk falls, the virgin's procession sets off back to church, accompanied by bands of musicians.

**Second week**
**Ayabaca (Piura)**
**Señor Cautivo de Ayabaca**
**The sweet countenance of the Lord**

Every year, thousands of the faithful from various parts of northern Peru and even Ecuador set out on a pilgrimage to Ayabaca, a town 211 km northeast of the northern coastal city of Piura. On the main day of the festival, a procession of the image of the Captive Christ (Señor Cautivo de Ayabaca) through the town streets, which have been previously decorated with carpets of flower petals. Before the Spanish Conquest, peasants in the same spot placed offerings at the temples of Aypate and La Huaca. The devout have a firm belief in the miracles that the image is said to have performed in healing the sick. Its origin dates back to 1751, when a Spanish priest had the image carved, featuring a disconcerting expression, a blend of sweetness and mystery.

**18-28**
**Lima**
**The Lord of Miracles**
**The largest procession in South America**

This procession, which gathers together the largest number of believers in South America, dates back to colonial times, when a slave, brought over from Angola, drew the image of a black Christ on the walls of a wretched hut in the plantation of Pachacamilla, near Lima. The image stayed on the wall despite several attempts to erase it. This was to spark widespread devotion for the image, which survived intact on the wall despite an earthquake in 1746 which leveled all surrounding buildings. As a result of this event, worship of the image rose to new heights, until it became what is today the most widely venerated image in the city of Lima. The heart of the celebration is one of the largest processions to take place every year in the Americas, where tens of thousands of the faithful dress in purple tunics, singing hymns and praying as they accompany the image. The litter which bears the painting weighs two tons and is borne on the shoulders of believers who set out on the traditional 24-hour procession from the church of Las Nazarenas, crossing downtown Lima until it reaches the church of La Merced in Barrios Altos. Around

*Lord of Miracles procession, Lima*
*PromPerú*

this time of year, the streets fill with vendors of a wide variety of typical dishes and sweets, such as the famous Turrón de Doña Pepa. In October to commemorate the Lord of Miracles **(**Señor de los Milagros), Lima hosts the well-known bullfight season which carries the same name and is held in the centuries-old Plaza de Acho bullring. The season features some major bullfighters (toreros) from Spain and Latin America.

**3rd week**
**Ica**
**Señor de Luren**
**The Christ of the desert**

The origin of the devotion for the crucified Christ of Luren (Señor de Luren), patron of the city of Ica (300 km south of Lima), dates back to 1570, when the image was mysteriously lost in the desert during a trip from Lima to Ica, before reappearing in a desolate outpost called Luren. Later, Nicolás de Ribera the Elder, Lima's first mayor, had a small church built in this spot as well as a hospital for highland Indians. Today, the modern church, built in a Romanticist style, houses the carved wooden image of the dying Christ, as well as those of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene. On the main day of the festival, Sunday, the image is borne aloft in a procession through the city from nightfall until dawn the following day.

**NOVEMBER**
**1-2**
**All Saints Day and Day of the Dead**
**Pan-Peruvian**
**Speaking to the souls of the departed**

On these days, which are dedicated to the memory of the dead, Peruvians tend to attend Mass and then in coastal communities, head to the cemetery, bringing flowers and in the highlands, food to share symbolically with the souls of the dead. The worship of the dead was a common and respected custom during pre-Hispanic times in Peru, and part of that tradition, combined with Christian elements, still lives on today. In the village of La Arena, in Piura, the locals head for the main square in the morning bringing their children dressed in their Sunday best. Also attending are relatives who have lost a very young child or niece or nephew. When these people meet a child who looks like the deceased, they give him or her small breadrolls, candied sweet potato or coconut and other sweets wrapped in finely-decorated bags, which are called "angels". At night, the relatives hold a candlelight vigil in the cemetery until dawn on November 2. In Arequipa and Junín the bags of "angels" are replaced by breadrolls in the shape of babies, called t'anta wawas.

**DECEMBER**
**24 y 25**
**Pan-Peruvian**
**Andean Christmas**
**A time of integration and artistic splendor**

The rural context of the arrival of the infant Christ allowed early Peruvians to identify immediately with the festivity, highlighted by artisan creativity, a sense of aesthetics and the religious devotion of Andean settlers. Andean Christmas began taking on characteristics of its own by adding elements from each region. These elements stand out for the extreme care with which

highlanders put together Nativity scenes in churches and homes, perform dances and plays, cook typical dishes and produce a wide range of handicrafts such as Nativity scenes in Huamanga stone, retablos featuring images related to Christmas and pottery or carved gourds called mates burilados decorated with Yuletide scenes. In most Andean communities, the festival continues until la Bajada de los Reyes (the arrival of the three wise men), January 6, when traditionally people exchange gifts.

**24**
**Cuzco**
**Santuranticuy Fair**
**Saints for sale**

The origin of this fair dates back to the Vice-regency, and today has become one of the largest arts and crafts fairs in Peru. It is held in the main square of Cuzco, where artisans lay out blankets on the sidewalks, as is the custom in traditional Andean fairs. Santuranticuy, which means "saints for sale", is a provisional market where image carvers and artisans sell a wide variety of figurines to liven up Christmas and fit out the Nativity scenes that are set up in homes and parish churches. The fair also sells a variety of ceramic objects brought from Pucará and Quinua. Here one can find all sorts of arts and crafts, such as wooden carvings, pottery and the boxed scenes called retablos. At night, street vendors sell a traditional hot and sweet rum punch called ponche, to warm up chilly visitors.

**27**
**El Guayabo and El Carmen**
**(Chincha, Ica)**
**Virgen del Carmen**
**The little peon**

The Virgen del Carmen is the most widely venerated image in Peru after the Lord of Miracles. Its worship dates back to colonial times when friars from the Carmeline Order arrived. In various communities in Ica (300 km south of Lima) as well as the areas of El Carmen and El Guayabo in Chincha (200 km south of Lima), home to most of Peru's Afro-Peruvian population, the locals render a special homage to the virgin at the end of every year. What is unique about this festival is that here it is called La Peoncita (the little peon) for its link with teenagers who perform the dances called los negritos and las pallitas, in honor of the Virgin.

**COCA LEAF AND OFFERINGS TO THE EARTH GODDESS**
**The mystique of fertility**

Pre-Columbian religions have lived on as part of ancestral rites that link Man with Nature, particularly in the Andean world, rites that take on major symbolic importance. The Pachamama or Mother Earth, goddess of fertility, lives in Urkhupacha, or the inner world, whose fruits she offers up to feed mankind. This is why, within the reciprocal logic of the Andes, during August the villagers make offerings (known as pagos or pagapus). The offering consists of coca leaves, unworked silver, chicha, wine and jungle seeds attributed with symbolic and magic powers called huayruros. The same offering is made to the Apus, the spirits of their ancestors who are said to live within the mountains. Coca, a sacred plant which served to mediate between the inner world (the Apus and the Pachamama) and the exterior world (Man) can be found in countless mestizo religious ceremonies in communities in the provinces and even in the cities. The leaves, when chewed and mixed with saliva to form a wad in the mouth (a process called chakchar), help the user forget his weariness while working. Spread over a blanket on the ground, coca leaves are also read to predict the future.

# Dances and Instruments

Thanks to archaeological discoveries of musical instruments, we now know that in Peru, music dates back at least 10.000 years.

This ancient tradition produced the quena flute, zampoña pan-pipe and pututo trumpet made from a sea conch, in addition to a host of wind instruments crafted from cane, mud, bone, animal horns and precious metals, as well as a variety of percussion instruments.

As a result of the New World's contact with the West, vast numbers of new instruments were incorporated into Peru's music, although many were creatively adapted to the rhythmic and melodic necessities of each region. A clear example of this can be seen in the many transformations that have changed the shape of the harp, the violin and the guitar in the Peruvian highlands.

The coming together of the Andean and Western worlds gave birth to more than 1.300 types of music. But two of these types reached beyond their regional boundaries and have become veritable symbols of Peru's identity: the huayno and the marinera. A blend of joyous nature and nostalgia, the huayno has carved out a position as the basis for the creation of contemporary rhythms on the strength of its simple and flexible musical structure.

The marinera, which unlike the huayno is not such a universal rhythm, features variations that are clearly differentiated along the coast and in the highlands, and thanks to its musical beauty and stirring choreography, it is widely danced across the country.

The festive nature of the African migrant has also helped to enrich Peru's musical panorama: Peru's black population invented the cajón and discovered the uses of the quijada, the donkey's jawbone, as a percussion instrument.

The jungle region is also home to a variety of rhythms, dances and instruments linked to festivals and rituals, such as the use of the manguaré (a hollow trunk), called a "semiotic drum" as it can be used to send messages over great distances in the jungle.

Today, Peru is still assimilating new instruments –synthesizers, electric guitars, drums and harmonicas– while continuing to create new musical styles like chicha. This has allowed Peruvian music to open up to fresh influences, spread across the country and abroad, beyond that space usually reserved for local music.

This capacity for fusion and musical innovation clearly expresses the integrating force and dynamic nature of Peruvian culture.

### The Marinera and the Cajón

**The Marinera**
The marinera is a spin-off from the zamacueca and the mozamala. In 1893, Abelardo Gamarra "El Tunante" dubbed the dance the "marinera" in honor of naval hero Miguel Grau during a piano concert performed by a little girl, who later in life was to work hard to spread the popularity of the dance, Doña Rosa Mercedes Ayarza de Morales. This encounter gave birth to the best-known marinera, "la Decana", later rebaptized as "La Concheperla". Since then, the marinera has gradually conquered the hearts and minds of Peruvians everywhere. In 1938, the marinera was performed for the first time at Lima's Teatro Municipal in the Independence Day concert. Today, marinera festivals are held all over Peru, the best-known of which is the festival staged in Trujillo in January. The dance has several different styles, differentiated by their region: marinera costeña (coast), serrana (highlands) and norteña (north). It is danced forcefully by a couple, featuring a series of elegant movements and a highly complex choreography involving coordinated and synchronized movements. Both dancers hold a handkerchief in their hand throughout the entire dance, which highligths the courting couple, despite the fact that here is never any physical contact between the two.

**The Cajón**
This instrument, of Afro-Peruvian origin, is played in most coastal variations of the marinera, as well as in Creole music (música criolla) and Afro music in general. Crafted from a wooden box, the cajón relies on a sound-hole carved in

the back. The cajón player sits on top and raps out a rhythm directly with his palms. Albeit a simple-looking instrument, the cajón has begun to make waves abroad, even being incorporated into flamenco.

**The Huayno and the Quena**

**The Huayno**
Unquestionably Peru's premier Andean dance. The huayno's pre-Columbian origins have been modified by the assimilation of Western influences, which is why today there are many regional variations. Its musical structure derives from a pentatonic base with a binary rhythm, a structural characteristic that enabled this musical style to become the basis of hybrid rhythms, from chicha to Andean rock. Huayno is danced in pairs, who swerve and turn, making short hops and performing thunderous footwork in the zapateo. Instruments pressed into the band to play the huayno include the quena flute, charango (Andean guitar), harp and violin. Some variations of the huayno are performed to the strains of the equivalent of a marching band, which have added instruments such as trumpets, saxophone and accordion. At the same time, although they are different musical styles, the earthy sensitivity of the huayno is linked more to the marinera than is apparent. One only has to listen to the refrain from a highland marinera: "there is no marinera without huayno/nor huayno without marinera / little highland girl in the green skirt/this third part's for you".

**The Quena**
Peru's most widely-played wind instrument, the quena dates back to the pre-Hispanic era. Made from a hollow tube of cane, wood, bone or plastic, the quena features a chiseled mouthpiece. The instrument is pierced with five or six soundholes which produce the notes depending on the combination of fingers and how the musician blows into the instrument. Each region has come up with its own size quena.

**The Huaylarsh and the Harp**

**The Huaylarsh**
This rhythm and its dance is linked to the joyful fiestas that are held at harvest time in the central highlands. The energy and vivacious nature of the huaylarsh are highlighted by the leaps and demonstrations of agility by the male dancers, while the women perform nimble footwork or zapateo. During the choreography, the group of dancers break up into pairs to show their skill in a light-hearted competition. Instruments used in the bands include harps, violins, saxophones, clarinets, trumpets and bombo drums.

**The Harp**
This stringed instrument is shaped like a cone with a large soundhole. The arpa (harp) is of Western origins and has become highly popular in Peru, especially in the Andes, where it is widely played for its versatile ability to come up with high-pitched sounds. The harp has been modified and adapted in several regions, both in shape and tuning.

**The Festejo and the Quijada**

**The Festejo**
This Afro-Peruvian dance is wildly popular along the central coast. Danced in pairs, it features insinuating movements, yet avoids physical contact. The joyful and suggestive movements, joyful and pretty steamy, irradiate body language that is redolent with sensuality. Backing instruments include the guitar, cajón and quijada, and are accompanied by a lead singer and backing vocalists.

**The Quijada**
The creative nature of Afro-Peruvian musician has turned the lower jawbone of a donkey, mule or horse into a surprisingly effective percussion instrument. It is held with one hand and banged with the fist of the other in time to the beat. The unique sound of the quijada, which is produced by the jawbone's rattling molars, is amplified in the bone structure itself.

**Carnival and the Mandolin**

**Carnival**
This is a dance that, with regional variations, is performed all over Peru, particularly in the rural areas of Puno, Cajamarca and the Amazon. The dance involves troupes or comparsas who take to the streets together with the musicians. The lyrics, which usually follow a rhyming pattern, are often bawdy, satirical and irrepressibly joyful. Instruments include guitars, accordions, mandolins, Andean percussion (tinyas and tambourines) and charangos.

**The Mandolin**
Of European origin, and similar to the lute, the mandolin has undergone a series of changes in Peru, both in material and its soundhole, as well

as in the number of strings. It is frequently played together with the guitar, forming duos to play huaynos and other musical styles popular in the highlands.

**The Santiago and the Tinya**

**The Santiago**
This musical style stems from shepherd customs. The Santiago is played in Andean ceremonies such as cattle branding and fertility rituals held for the herd. On these occasions, the musicians, especially women, perform a series of propitiatory songs featuring a simple rhythm yet of great sensivity. Instruments often include the tinya and the wakrapuko, or trumpet made from a cow's horn.

**The Tinya**
This percussion instrument is a small hand-held drum made from leather. It is widely played in the Andes, mainly by women. It is used in banquets, for dancers and ceremonies dealing with farm life, especially during the harvest season and cattle-branding.

**Creole Waltz and the Guitar**

**Creole Waltz or Vals Criollo**
This Creole version of the Viennese waltz is danced in pairs who hold each other's hands in an unfinished embrace, and features tightly intertwined movements in a style created by Lima residents in the nineteenth century. The dance spread through the urban middle class as a sign of their romantic yearning for their Lima that was rapidly changing. Instruments include the guitar and cajón.

**The Guitar**
This is probably the most widely-played instrument in Peru. The most common shape is the Spanish classical guitar, but there are at least 10 different types found in Peru, all varying in shape, material and number of strings. Tuning also varies according to region. The guitar is often accompanied by several other instruments depending on the musical style and is played to accompany vals criollo, marinera, festejo, huayno, zamacueca, tondero and even chicha.

**The Sikuri and the Zampoña**

**El Sikuri**
This is the somewhat martial dance of the Sikuris, a people who originated in the Andean tundra region called the Altiplano. It is danced in several groups forming troupes or comparsas which are organized in large circles around musicians playing zampoñas of varying sizes. The choreography displays the complementary and harmonic nature that should be present in all human integration, as one group can only play half the notes, making the other group indispensable for the full melody.

**The Zampoña**
A member of the pan-pipe family, this instrument is made of a cluster of different sized cane tubes bound together, forming one or two rows. The size of the tube determines the musical note it emits. The instrument comes in different regional variations, featuring canes of different size, number and shape. The zampoña is commonly played in festivities in southern Peru, especially in the department of Puno. One of the variations is the antara, which is crafted from the finest cane available.

**The Harawi and the Charango**

**The Harawi**
Also known as the yaraví, this is a musical style whose melodies are redolent with sadness and longing. The harawi is believed to be the oldest musical style in Peru's repertoire, and dates from the form of poetry recited in the Inca era. The somewhat drowsy music is interrupted by frequent periods of silence that lend a dramatic air to the piece. This rhythm is generally not danced, unless it is tacked onto a huayno or marinera, which often occurs in some of its mestizo variations. Backing instruments include the charango, mandolin and quena.

**The Charango**
This instrument is a hybrid of the classical guitar, although smaller than the original. The charango has 10 strings in five double courses and features a body made from an armadillo shell, or kirkincho, although charangos are also made out of wood. It is widely played in the southern Andes.

**Danzantes de Tijeras**
**Physical agility and ritual challenge**

From the Western point of view, the danza de tijeras, or scissors dance, is basically an impressive display of art and physical dexterity. But for the Andean inhabitants or mestizos who live in highland communities, it is above all a com-

plex ritual. An air of mystery surrounds the danzaq, the dancers, who in a show of strength and flexibility, put their skill to the test with gymnastic leaps to the strains of the harp and the violin. Priests in colonial times claimed the dancers' magical halo was the result of an alleged pact with the Devil, due to the surprising feats they performed during the dance. These feats, called atipanakuy, include sword-swallowing, sticking pins into their faces, eating insects, frogs and even snakes amongst other Fakir-like acts. The central instrument of the dance is the pair of scissors, made from two separate sheets of metal around 25 cm long which together take the shape of round-bladed scissors. The dance is most commonly performed in Ayacucho, Apurímac, Arequipa, the Ica highlands, Huancavelica and Lima.

**Chicha or Peruvian Cumbia**
**A new musical style dominates South America**

Chicha is a new musical style which is fast becoming popular over much of South America. Although it has added influences of rock and other contemporary rhythms, the two musical styles that have given rise to chicha (also known as Peruvian cumbia) are the huayno and the Colombian cumbia. The rhythm has not only spread like wildfire across Peru, it has also become popular in neighboring countries such as Argentina, Chile, Bolivia and Colombia. The main characteristic of this rhythm, which has become a hit largely in Spanish American circles, is that it is constantly mixing with new rhythms, both modern and traditional, as well as the use of an enormous variety of instruments, largely electric.

**Whistling Gourds**
**Sounds and voices from the Past**

Many sounds and instruments that are currently found in melodies and rhythms played in Peru today date back to the country's pre-Hispanic past. Apart from percussion, the most commonly played instruments were winds, that included whistles, quenas, antaras and trumpets, used even today, and huacos silbadores, whistling gourds that can be seen in museums such as Lima's Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia. These odd-looking instruments, which were recovered from temples, chieftains' palaces, the funeral shrouds of warriors and children's tombs, also had decorative and symbolic functions and were linked to ritual ceremonies: gourds with sounds that ranged from 33-50 hundredths of a semitone represented human beings, those that ranged from 80-100 portrayed sacrificial victims, and those with sounds that were spaced by 25 hundredths of a semitone represented supernatural beings.

In general, whistling gourds feature two acoustic chambers linked together, with a series of soundholes in a row with different sizes that enabled the musician to vary the pitch like a flute depending on how he blew into the gourd. In some gourds, the acoustic chamber not only amplifies when the musician blows, it also produces sounds when liquids such as water or chicha are poured from one chamber to another.

# Arts & Crafts & Folk Art

Peruvian artisanry ranks possibly amongst the most varied arts and crafts found on Earth. Proof of this stems from the growing network of exporters who each year exhibit the creativity of Peruvian artists on markets in Europe, Asia and North America. The diversity, color, creativity and multiple uses of Peruvian craftwork make it a fundamental activity not just to forge Peru's identity, but also ensure the survival of thousands of families, and even entire communities such as Sarhua and Quinua in Ayacucho. These small works of folk art that have sparked the admiration of all and are the legacy of centuries of history imbued with pre-Hispanic forms and symbols, that blending with or surviving alongside other art forms brought over by the Spaniards. This multiple and complex identity is paradoxically one of the reasons for the marked tendency of Peruvian artisanry to approach modern naïf art, giving creations a touch of tenderness and innocent wisdom.The high standards of quality of Peruvian artisanry can be appreciated in the harmony of the geometric designs weaved into textiles, the painstaking detail in the scenes of everyday farming life carved into the gourds called mates burilados and the cultural melting pot to be found in the colorful boxed scenes called retablos. It is also found in the bizarre cosmic vision of Shipibo jungle Indian patterns, the fine carvings done in Huamanga stone, the fleeting wonder of the carpets made from flower petals, fireworks and giant wax candles, the complex Baroque style in wooden carvings, the beauty in gold and silverwork, and the countless forms taken on by the clay used in pottery. But these works of art are just one side of a people who communicate principally through their art, using a language based on the key elements of abundance, fertility and faith in the future.

*Artisan of Olave at work, Cuzco*
*Jorge Sarmiento / PromPerú*

## FLEETING ART

One of the greatest and most mysterious attractions of fleeting art is the arduous, patient effort to create beauty that lasts just a few minutes and even seconds. These art forms include those whose work can only be glimpsed for a short space of time, despite being works of art that have taken a great deal of time and creativity to put together.

### Fireworks

The ancient art of fireworks is deep-rooted in communities in the highlands and along the coast, where artisans have wrought local variations such as images of giant flowers and animals. It is impossible to imagine a festival in honor of a patron saint without a dazzling display of fireworks.

### Carpets of Flower Petals

Put together for big processions both in the highlands and along the coast, vast floral decorations are laid out on the streets of many cities and towns where the procession of the patron saint is to pass. The color of the flowers and the perfection of the motifs, generally saints, shields, maps, landscapes and all sorts of animals put together with great dedication, are aimed at providing a fleeting splendor before being crushed by thousands of marching feet during the processions.

### T'anta Wawas

Another technique which is practically an art form is the baking and preparation of t'anta wawas, or decorated breads. The wheatflour breads represent a wide variety of motifs such as children (wawas), families, homes, crowns of flowers and animals. Styles range from impeccable simplicity to decoration that is quite complex. Every year in Lima, a t'anta wawas competition is held on All Saints Day. The departments of Junín, Arequipa, Cuzco and Huancavelica (Center and South of Peru) generally prepare the best prizewinners.

Candles and Giant Wax Candles
Wax art is another art form that is directly linked to religious worship. Cuzco, Ayacucho, Huaraz, Arequipa and Lima produce vast numbers of candles and decorated cirios, giant wax candles with religious motifs. During the Easter Week procession in Ayacucho, the litters used to carry the saints have their base richly decorated with wax figures. The most common motifs are flowers, leaves, the faces of saints, angels and barnyard animals. But the most common items in festivals all over Peru are candles and cirios, which come in a range of sizes and decorations. During the festival of the Lord of Miracles (Señor de los Milagros), the variety and decoration of the candles is impressive: it is a moving sight to see the cirios candles lit next to the image of the black Christ in the church of Las Nazarenas in downtown Lima.

## FUNERAL ART

The tradition of funeral art in Peru was first made evident in gravestone paintings. In the cemetery of Chilca, 60 km south of Lima, one can take in a variety of styles beginning with the reproduction of classical Western religious paintings, which later gave way to the portrayal of scenes of the daily lives of the deceased. Another place where funeral picture art is already a tradition is Puno, where artists paint scenes of the nether world. Similarly, in Cajamarca, in the areas of Huambocancha and Porcón, cemeteries are filled with gravestones carved in quarried stone with images of miniature church façades in a variety of warm colors. This art form also includes the rise of a folk style of funeral architecture in cemeteries in Lima's outlying districts. These cemeteries have recreated, in scale model form, houses, churches and even entire villages.

## POTTERY

Pottery is one of the most widespread art forms to be found in Peru. Ancient pre-Hispanic techniques used by the Vicús, Recuay and Pashash cultures, as well as styles known as Colombian and negative painting (by limiting the flow of oxygen in the furnace) are used today in the community of Chulucanas (located in Piura) and in the northern jungle by natives of the Arabelas community. Another technique used in Simbilá, Piura, as well as in Mollepampa, Cajamarca, is that of paleteo, where the potter shapes the clay with his hands and by beating it with a spatula. Utilitarian and decorative pottery produced in Chulucanas –particularly in the district of La Encantada, where 250 artisans have been registered– is one of the finest to be found in Peru. It has gained its fame from the fine motifs crafted by potters in the use of the black color and the glazing of their urns, as well as the portrayal of typical local characters (chicha vendors, musicians and dancers) and animals that spring from the hand-worked clay. Pottery is heavily traded in the markets of Cuzco, Juliaca (Puno), Arequipa and a network of arts and crafts centers and fairs held in Lima.

Ayacucho Pottery
In Quinua, a village located 40 km from Ayacucho, pottery is the town's main activity. The quality of the red and cream-colored clay lend these works a unique characteristic. Despite their simple, almost childish forms, they are highly expressive. Quinua is best-known for ceramic pieces such as small churches, chapels, houses and bulls called the toro de Quinua. Local potters have also become popular for figures such as peasant farmers, gossiping neighbors and a variety of religious themes.

Puno Pottery
The best-loved ceramic figure to come out of Puno is the torito de Pucará, the ceramic bull that is one of Peru's best-known pieces of pottery. The figurine was originally made as a ritual element during the cattle-branding ceremony. The bull figure, which is also a flask, was used to hold the chicha which was mixed with the blood of cattle and drunk by the high priest conducting the ceremony. Puno potters also make churches, country chapels and homes, whose apparently unassuming design is covered with a white glaze. The figures are decorated with flowers and dashes of ground glass. Other common motifs include musicians, dancers and various elements of flora and fauna from the Lake Titicaca area.

Cuzco Pottery
Cuzco's pottery is heavily influenced by Inca tradition. In a movement that has revitalized Cuzco art, known as Inca Renaissance, potters have created a vast collection of pieces. These include the Tica Curuna (a flower motif), ppucus (dishes) and various types of colorful crockery, such as keros, arybalos, qochas, ayanas and raquis. Another trend in pottery is the so-called "grotesque" tradition, originally created by artisan Erilberto Mérida, and apparently inspired by the figures in Quinua pottery. This style comprises rough, unpolished figurines such as peasants and

Christs, with deformed and even tormented facial features with oversized hands.

Shipibo Pottery
In the jungle, in addition to the Arabela, the Shipibo women living around the Ucayali River produce pottery from a highly malleable clay called neapo. The most common decorative motifs include the well-known geometric lines or designs, which artisans use to represent their vision of the world. The most elaborate objects include globets carved into shapes that are half-human, half-beast, which take on different positions, showing clearly-defined sexes. The potters also frequently craft huge jars shaped like animals such as tortoise and some of the local bird species.

## BASKETS AND STRAW ARTICLES

This art form includes straw hats and baskets woven from native reed species such as carrizo, junco and totora. Baskets and hats are produced mainly in the departments of San Martín, Piura and Cajamarca, while totora reed is largely used in La Libertad and Lambayeque to make the reed rafts called caballitos de totora, vessels used for thousands of years by fishermen in the seaside community of Huanchaco, near Trujillo.

## IMAGES

This art form dates back to artisan traditions during the Vice-regency, and involves the creation of objects linked to religious and even magical ceremonies. The departments of Ayacucho, Cuzco and Huancavelica produce the greatest variety of figures. These traditional images include the retablo de San Marcos or cajón, crosses, saints, Nativity scenes, the Holy Family and the many different portrayals of the infant Christ. These figures are made from a variety of materials, including dough made from potatoes, medlar seeds, plaster, glued cloth and maguey, the local fruit. The most common images produced by this art-form include religious images with long, stylized necks created by artisan Hilario Mendívil and his wife Georgina in the artists' quarter of San Blas in Cuzco.

Masks
Many Andean dances use masks as part of the dancer's costume. The most common motifs include demons, angels, blacks (negritos), Spaniards (españoles) and all kinds of animals. The most important exhibition of masks is held in the southern Andes, such as during the festival of the Virgen de la Candelaria. Junín is another major producer of masks, while a rich variety linked to myths and customs of jungle villages is manufactured in the Amazon area, like for example in the Bora community in Loreto.

Masks are made from a range of materials that are as varied as their place of origin: plaster, leather, wood, wire sheeting and tin. The most typical masks include those of the Piro culture, the parlampán (picaresque characters of the area of Huaral), the auquis of Ancash, the jija huanca (styled from gargoyle heads), the huacones of the central highlands and the famous demons of the seven deadly sins of Puno.

Retablos
Tiny human figures, animals from the highlands, images of Christian saints and pre-Columbian gods, stars, mountains and lakes are just some of the elements found in the colorful world portrayed by the cajón or retablo de San Marcos. This art form, brought over from Spain, dates back to the dawn of Western civilization and was preceded by Roman portable images made up of three slabs that closed over each other. In the rest of Europe, this art form was known by the name of frontpieces, giving way to the monumental friezes that featured in church altars between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. The closest resemblance to the Peruvian retablo is the Caja de Santo, a sort of portable altar used in Spain as part of the paraphernalia of Catholic rituals. The Ayacucho artisans saw the portable altars as the perfect means to bring together two religious traditions –their own and Catholicism imposed by Spain– without arousing suspicion amongst colonial authorities bent on stamping out pagan idols. The retablo features two levels: the upper level, which portrays the Heavens, with saints and sacred Andean beasts, and the lower world, portraying the world down on Earth. These retablos were originally limited to the area dominated by Ayacucho shepherds and peasant farmers. And in fact the Ayacucho artisans are the ones to have kept alive this tradition, that is such a vital part of Peruvian imagery. The best-known craftsmen who make retablos include the late Joaquín López Antay, Florentino Jiménez and Jesús Urbano. These three men gave rise to three schools or trends of the retablo: one which features a magical-religious current, another that focuses on regional customs and another with historic and realistic content. Today, styles and themes have multiplied as Cuzco emerges as yet

another major retablo production center.

Huamanga Stone Carvings
There are several kinds of stone that are used for carving in Peru: granite, basalt, andesite, piedra del lago (found in Puno), and the white alabaster known as piedra de Huamanga. Huamanga stone carvings started up in colonial times due to the scarcity of marble and porcelain. The early motifs dwelled on the infant Christ and other religious images such as saints, crosses, virgins and relics. Later craftsmen were to develop new religious motifs and images linked to the Creole culture (for example the image of the vicuña standing over the Castillian lion). Today, Huamanga stone carvings portray Nativity scenes within oval-shaped recesses, replicas of the monument of the Pampa de la Quinua (scene of a famous battle for independence), as well as other figures; all with a rough finish and mainly offered as souvenirs.

Wooden Carvings
Wooden carving as an art form heavily influenced by religious polychrome sculptures took off in colonial times. Artists made retablos, statuettes and decorated furniture in churches and convents whose complex Baroque style reached its peak in the famous San Blas pulpit in San Blas church in Cuzco. One of the current wooden carving centers is to be found in the town of Molinos, near Huancayo. There, artisans make a range of objects from utensils and decorative pieces to toys, featuring acrobats with movable arms, as well as a series of animals including roosters, ducks, horses, donkeys, lions and a veritable bestiary of mythical beats. Other finely carved pieces include the bastones de Sarhua, where the painted boards (tablas) are made.

## CARVED GOURDS

The legenaria bulgaris, the Peruvian dried squash gourd, is the basis of the pure art of the mate burilado. The oldest carved gourds date back 3.500 years and were found at the pre-Hispanic temple of Huaca Prieta in the northern coastal valley of Chicama. Recently, the technique has taken off in the Ayacucho region of Huanta, which has given rise to the mates huantas. These works of art are known for the vitality of their thick but sure lines, which the artisans employ to portray scenes from everyday farming life. Another variation involves miniature drawings, which can often only be seen with a magnifying glass. The technique consists of etching fine lines into the gourd with a scalpel, in a comic book style to represent scenes from farming life. Today, the area of the central Mantaro Valley and specifically the districts of Cochas Chico and Cochas Grande are the areas where most mates burilados are made.

## JEWELRY

The abundance of minerals and semi-precious stones in Peru have made it possible to develop creative metalwork since pre-Hispanic times. The oldest example of goldsmithy in South America dates back to the Chavín culture (1.000 BC). Later, priceless pieces were found in the areas of Chancay, Paracas and Cuzco, as well as superb work done by the Mochica, Chimú and Lambayeque cultures. In the late 1980s archaeologists discovered the Royal Tombs of the Lord of Sipán corresponding to the Moche culture (600-1.200 AD). The tomb of the warrior priest featured ceremonial dress and ornaments worked in gold with techniques that were highly advanced for the time. These techniques, used even today by artisans working with jewels, sculptured pieces and utensils, include alloys, smelting with laminated pieces, chiseling, soaking, smelting gold threads, filigree, and applications, incrustations and clasps.

Silversmithy
The most important centers of silver artisanry are to be found in the departments of Junín, Huancavelica, Ayacucho and Cuzco. Silversmiths, who have kept alive the colonial tradition, develop a wide variety of shapes and motifs, crafting jewelry in the shape of barnyard animals, peacocks, horses and stars, as well as articles for religious and domestic use. Other important pieces in silverwork include wrought silver pinches in colonial Cuzco style, tupus, or brooches to pin together the llicllas, silver alloy necklaces worked in black onyx and bamboo, silver necklaces inlaid with obsidian, earrings fitted with opals of several colors, and burnished silver in colonial style, as well as framed in wood for paintings and mirrors.

Gold Filigree
This goldsmithy technique involves thinning the gold to minimum proportions to thread it together, creating jewels of extraordinary beauty. The town of Catacaos in Piura, heirs to the Vicus culture, is a major production center of the delicate art of filigree. The most commonly-produced pieces are dormilonas, a type of earring, and neck-

laces, which often feature the moon motif.

Semi-precious Stones
Other materials used in arts and crafts, especially in jewelry, are chosen from a vast variety of semi-precious stones, many of which found in Peru, while others are imported, like in the pre-Hispanic era, from elsewhere in the Americas in what is today Colombia and Ecuador. Generally these stones, the most spectacular of which are Peruvian turquoise, or crisocola, onyx, obsidian and opal, are used to make necklaces, earrings, rings and bracelets. Nor should one forget the use of the traditional red seashell called spondylus, once called "the sacred food of the gods", used to craft superb pieces of jewelry.

## LEATHER GOODS

The first superb works of leather were made during colonial times: chests, armchairs and a tremendous variety of saddles, harnesses and other riding pieces. The decorative motifs were developed using painting, soaking and embossing, ever inspired by the dominating Baroque art of the era. Today, artisans continue to make the same objects, especially chairs, armchairs, tables and chests, where decorations involve traditional themes. Puno artisans also make leather horses featuring a beautiful and tender naïf style.

## SARHUA BOARDS

The Ayacucho community of Sarhua is now world-famous for its painted boards (tablas), one of the most original examples of what is known as folk painting, a tradition that includes drawings by Spanish chronicler Guamán Poma de Ayala (sixteenth century), watercolors by Bishop Martínez Compañón (sixteenth century), works by Creole painter Pancho Fierro (nineteenth century) and paintings by other anonymous artists who painted murals in provincial churches and chapels from colonial times up until recently. Sarhua boards are also called quellcas, for their similarity to the ancient drawings that the Incas had made to note down events during their regime. They are colorful illustrations painted on a flat wooden board, portraying the town customs, and accompanied by a written explanation. In the beginning, the tablas were drawn on the roof beams (where family trees were once notched), but today the art form tends to be rectangular or square to make the boards easier to trade. One of the driving forces who rejuvenated this art form was Carmelón Berrocal (1964-1998), who modified the established techniques without losing sight of the original features, creating paintings based on oral traditions that he himself compiled.

## TEXTILES

Modern Peruvian weavers are heirs to a long-running pre-Hispanic tradition that was developed across the length and breadth of Peru. Outstanding work includes the Paracas funeral shrouds and Inca and Ayacucho Wari weavings. The oldest textiles ever found were uncovered at the pre-Colombian temple of Huaca Prieta in the Chicama Valley, and are believed to date back 4.000 years. Preferred materials –which are still used today– include brown and white cotton; vicuña, alpaca and llama wool. Other materials occasionally include human hair and bat fibers, and more commonly, gold and silver thread. In addition, natural dyes are still used today, combined with aniline and other industrial dyes, while the vertical loom and pedal loom are still the most commonly used tool for weaving blankets and yards of cloth. Key weaving departments include Ayacucho, Puno, Cuzco, Junín, Apurímac and Lima. Cuzco decorative work often features the tika, representing the potato flower, and the sojta, a geometric design symbolizing the sowing season. Cuzco weavers produce a wide variety of chullos (woolen caps with earflaps), woolen cocaleaf pouches, blankets featuring geometric patterns, cummerbunds and chumpis weaved by the meter, like the ones sold at the Sicuani market, or in the Sunday market at Písac. Ayacucho is another major textile center, as it is a region where over the past few decades artisans have gained a following for their tapestries of weft and warp with abstract motifs.

Hessian Weave
This form of artisanry is of contemporary origin, brought over from Chile in the 1970s. Known locally as arpilleras, this cloth often features previously elaborated figures representing themes such as testimonies and local traditions. The portrayal of characters, animals and plants sewn into the main fabric lend the material a three-dimensional effect. Women quickly incorporated Hessian weave into artisanry, especially the highland migrants in the outskirts of Lima in districts such as Pamplona Alta, where in this technique they found a way to express themselves artistically. This artisanry, now common in Peru, has produced sterling work in areas such as Cuzco, where weavers have added traditional decora-

tive elements such as dolls and Inca textiles.

Embroidery
The embroidery work of Chiqnaya, Puno, is famous for its lambswool or cotton blankets, large and small, which represent scenes linked to the sowing and harvesting seasons and fiestas. Other well-known embroidery is produced in the town of Chivay, in the Colca Valley near Arequipa. Their work is decorated with ribbons and backstitches. The arts and crafts fair in Huancayo, Junín sells petticoats called "centro" which are entirely embroidered and used underneath a unicolor skirt.

Cotton Thread Inlays
The art of hilado, cotton threading, takes advantage of the natural color of brown cotton and the suggestive, sober tones of natural dyes, although now the native cotton variety is facing major competition from industrial cotton, especially in artisan areas of Monsefú (Lambayeque) and Cajamarca. The tradition dates back to pre-Hispanic Andean civilizations and artisan production mainly lives on in some communities along the coast and in the upper highland reaches. In the Amazon, craftsmen produce elaborate dresses and shawls or fine and flat threading, on which the Shipibo natives make drawings of geometric lines inspired by hallucinogenic visions brought on by the use of medicinal plants.

Tapestries
Tapestries crafted in the Ayacucho quarter of Santa Ana continue to use pre-Hispanic geometric designs, which have incorporated modern effects from an optical perspective. Another area that produces superb tapestries is San Pedro de Casta, in the highlands above Lima, where townspeople continue to use natural dyes from cochineal and plants.

Needlepoint
The discovery of chullos, bonnets, sashes, dolls and other pieces from pre-Hispanic cultures along the coast (Paracas, Nazca, Chancay and Mochica) showed that Tejidos de Punto (needlepoint) is an ancient technique. This technique basically involves knitting pieces –mainly clothing– by crossing one loop through another. However, the technique allowed artisans to decorate the textile with haut- and bas-relief. Today, this knitting technique has become a flourishing industry in Puno, Cuzco, Arequipa and Lima. Puno is the country's largest producer of chullos and sweaters made from vicuña, alpaca and lambswool. In this area, the men are the ones who knit socks, stockings and chullos from alpaca wool.

## DECORATIVE UTENSILS

The artisan market produces a wide variety of decorative pieces and utensils made from painted glass, wood or clay that have drawn from the style and techniques found in the decoration of Cajamarca mirrors. Utensils include trays, boxes, jewelry cases, desktop articles, decorations in the shape of animals, pens, table centerpieces and other articles. Decoration is largely centered around tiny flowers and leaves in a variety of colors. Many of them have been artificially aged with special dyes and then given a layer of varnish. Cajamarca and Apurímac are the main areas that produce these objects.

# Fairs, Crafts Centers and Museums

Arequipa
Fundo del Fierro
Plazuela de San Francisco
Objects made of sillar stone, copper, leather and wood

Cajamarca
Centro Artesanal y Forestal de Aylambo
(Aylambo Artisanry and Forestry Center)
On the road to Magdalena, Cajamarca
Decorative and utilitarian pottery

Cuzco
Feria de Chinchero
Cuzco
Every Sunday

Feria de Písac
Urubamba Valley
Every Sunday

Junín
Feria de Huancayo
Plaza de Huamanmarca (Huancayo)
Every Sunday

Lima
Mercado Inca
Between blocks 7 & 8 of Avenida La Marina, Pueblo Libre
Open every day from 9:00-21:00

Feria de Petit Thouars
48th block of Ave. Petit Thouars, Miraflores
Open every day from 9:00-21:00

San Martín
Casa artesanal de la mujer lamista
(Lama Womens' Artisanry Center)
Lamas Bajo district, Lamas, near city of Tarapoto
Weavings, pottery and musical instruments

The Traveler´s Guide to
FESTIVITIES, MUSIC AND FOLK ART IN PERU



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