

Gastronomic Tourism - Why Peru Is the Next Foodie Destination - Eat Peru

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Carapulcra – Peruvian cuisine stew of pork and dehydrated potatoes, with peanuts
Peru has become one of the epicentres of gastronomic travel. The variety of flavours, many unique among South American countries (and indeed, the world), offer a taste experience that draws foodies from all over the world. Add Peru’s vibrant culture, incredible landscapes, and friendly people, and you’ve got a recipe for world-class gastro-tourism. In fact, Peru is seen by many insiders, foodies, and tourists as the best culinary destination in the world

The city of Lima, gateway to the country, was once seen as a bit of a backwater on the travel

route. But Lima is at the forefront of the new food movement and now sees hundreds of thousands of visitors every year that arrive in search of the amazing cuisine the city has to offer. People are no longer content to breeze through the capital on their way to Cusco or Amazonas. Lima has become one of the foodie capitals of the world.

According to the Global Destination Cities Index (GDCI), Lima is one of the top destinations for international travellers to South America.

And Peru is the South American country [most visited by travellers](#) from the U.S.



Food Culture

In recent years there has been an explosion in food tours, cookery classes, and high-end restaurants around the country.

The [World's 50 Best Restaurants award](#) is a yearly list of the top restaurants around the world. And no surprises, Peruvian eateries are always in the top 10 and occasionally top the charts.

Reports on [consumer trends](#) in the US show Peruvian Food as a rising interest.

Peru is a leading organic exporter and organic products are used widely in the country. With the increase in awareness about organic food in the last few years, Peru is set to capitalise on a

increase in awareness about organic food in the last few years, Peru is set to experience on a potential healthy food destination.

The World Travel Awards (WTA) selects the leading culinary destinations every year and Peru is the [outstanding champion with six wins](#). In fact, Peru is the only country to win the prize since the awards began in 2012. There must be something in it. Peru's culinary scene is booming.



An Alternative to Traditional Travel

The commoditisation of travel in recent years has created a vacuum for more independent-minded and adventurous travellers. Culture vultures want more than just the opportunity to photograph churches, lie on the beach of, or trek up Machu Pichu with thousands of other visitors.

It's clear to see that over-tourism and the selfie-stick invasion in many countries have created a movement of travellers looking for other forms of inspiration in travel. Entire categories of travel such as "wellness" and "gastronomy" have evolved and bloomed.





World-Beating Chefs

New blood chefs like **Virgilio Martínez Véliz** and **Mitsuharu Tsumura** have also helped spread the word with their unique blends of cooking.

Martínez was awarded the title “Best Chef” at the World’s 50 Best Restaurant’s Chef’s Choice Award in 2017.

One man stands out as having done most of the groundwork for turning Peru into a foodie destination, **Gaston Acurio**. Along with wife Astrid (of Astrid y Gastón restaurant in Lima), Acurio has been (arguably) the most influential Peruvian chef of all time.

Food Tourism

I talked to Peruvian businesses in the gastronomic tourism sector to find out why they think Peru is exploding on the international scene as the place to go for foodies.

SkyKitchen





SkyKitchen runs cooking classes in Lima for people interested in learning how to make classic Peruvian dishes.

Classes offered include [how to prepare ceviche](#), papa a la huancaína, [causa rellena](#), [lomo saltado](#), and [picarones](#), as well as speciality [Andean dishes](#) and a pre-class fruit tasting session.

Diana from SkyKitchen believes that Peru's culinary scene has become popular for two reasons: Firstly, the wide range of tastes and flavours attracts foodies from all over. And secondly, Peru's well-known chefs have introduced the unique produce and flavours of the country to the rest of the world.

Where are the must-visit places in Peru for foodies?

In Lima, Mercado No1 de Surquillo is a nice spot to check our range of produce. Miraflores, of course, is the best place to find all different types of restaurants with different prices and concepts. Downtown Lima is great to get a taste of the real Lima. Don't forget Arequipa and the Amazon area with really exotic produce.

Can you recommend us a favourite restaurant?

For seafood, **Barra Mar** in La Mar Avenue or **Cevichando** in Paseo Gourmet Leuro. The prices are reasonable and the food is delicious. For [Nikkei food](#), **Sushi Pop** is a good choice. For [Peruvian sandwiches](#), the one and only **La Lucha**. For traditional Peruvian dishes with a twist, try **Panchita**. For visitors with no time to visit the Amazon region, **Amaz** is a good choice.

What's one dish you always want to introduce to visitors?

Ceviche is number one. Other good choices are Anticuchos and Causa.

What should people look for in a gastro/cultural tour or class?

They should hope to get information about Peruvian culture. That way they get to know about our food and its development during the past years.

Can you recommend any favourite food & travel books?

[Ceviche by Martin Morales](#) is a good cookbook in English and [Buenazo by Gastón Acurio](#) has a lot of Peruvian recipes with different variations.

Cusco Culinary

This daily cooking class experience is Tripadvisor's top-rated business of its type in Cusco. [Cusco Culinary](#) uses only organic products grown locally and focuses on healthy and nutritious meals.

I asked Roma from Cusco Culinary what she believes are the most common misconceptions about Peruvian food. According to Roma, tourists sometimes believe that eating a lot of Peruvian food might make them sick. They often mistakenly think that [ceviche, "cooked" in lemon juice is unhealthy](#), and can be the cause of stomach problems.

Her recommendations for the best restaurants in Lima are [Central](#) and Maido. Cusco's best eateries are **Cicciolina**, **Pachapapa**, and **Morena**.

Which dishes should visitors try?

Ceviche, [causa limeña](#), pisco sour, [ají de gallina](#), [lomo saltado](#) are just some of them. We prepare ceviche in our cooking classes ;)

What should people look for in a gastro/cultural tour?

We think that a gastronomic & cultural tour gives travellers the opportunity to not only try delicious food and learn how to prepare it, but to learn about the culture, the locally-sourced ingredients, and city.

Curious Monkey

[Curious Monkey](#) Food Tours is a Cusco-based walking tour of the best of the city's [street food](#) and markets, as well as tours to the [Sacred Valley](#) of the Andes.

Corinne from CM told me why Peru is such an amazing foodie destination and why gastronomic tourism has grown quickly in recent years.

"Peru has always had amazing food. But the spotlight is now on it with more chefs opening restaurants abroad and the country gaining global fame."

It also helps that Peru has won the top culinary destination award for several years in a row recently. It has put us on the radar for more than just hiking and the Inca ruins.”

Picarones Recipe:

Where are the must-visit places in Peru for foodies?

How do I narrow that down? I love Lima for the variety. We are based in Cusco and the Sacred Valley. Both places have an amazing variety of food.

Can you recommend us your favourite restaurants?

Refugio in Cusco it is almost a private dining experience in the hotels tiny dining room. It is not open for walk ins. Reservation only. Great cocktails, food and service. There's a lovely view of the city and San Blas, you can have dessert by the fireplace to enjoy the view.

What's one dish you always want to introduce to visitors?

One dish from the hundreds of amazing ones.... I do love to introduce them to [Anticuchos](#) from my favourite street-side grill here in Cusco. They are so tender.

What is the one thing tourists get wrong about Peruvian food?

That every Peruvian eats [Cuy](#), all the time.

What should people look for in a gastro/cultural tour?

I think they should look for something unique that really highlights the food and local vendors. We visit ladies that have had the recipes and techniques passed down 4 and 5 generations.

Can you recommend any favourite food & travel books?

I am reading **La Cocina de Los Incas** right now it gives a historical insight into the food and preparation techniques. I love cookbooks I have [Martin Morales' Andina](#) here on my shelf. Anything by our beloved Tony Bourdain. He is our food rock star (Amen: EatPeru)

Check out the team's [Instagram](#) for foodie inspiration.

Taste Of Peru

[Taste of Peru Culinary Tours](#) specializes in culinary tours and gourmet experiences in Lima, Cusco, and the Sacred Valley. The company offers walking tours, [Novoandina](#) tasting dinners, Peruvian cuisine classes, and [Pisco](#) tasting.

I asked Ana Maria from Peru Culinary Tours why Peru's gastronomic scene is booming.

"It all started with a group of visionary chefs that understood that our country has many things that mixed together can create the best cuisine in the world. The rich history and plethora of intertwined cultures that influenced Peru's growth have found in its cuisine an identity in which every Peruvian, no matter their background, can see eye to eye.

The extensive biodiversity and multiplicity of different regions gave our chefs a myriad of different fruits, vegetables, meats and spices to experiment with. With their creativity and vision, Peru has been the eye of a gastronomic storm that has attracted the attention of the whole world.

Today visitors not only expect a cultural experience when they come to Peru; they also want to have a taste of the cuisine and have access to the top restaurants Peru has to offer."

Where are the must-visit places in Peru for foodies?

You will find some of the best representative restaurants of our cuisine like [Central](#), Isolina, Kjolle, Siete and Merito. The trail takes up to the Miraflores district where you will find **Maido**, a Japanese fusion restaurant that is included in the Pellegrino Guide. **Amaz** with Amazonic cuisine. Rafael, IK and the classic Costanera 700. The gastronomic tour goes on to La Mar: Mercado, La Mar, Makketo, Mayta, and many more. We continue up to the San Isidro district where we will find [Astrid y Gaston](#), Osso and Malabar.

Can you recommend us a favourite restaurant?

Maido is without a doubt our favorite. From the cleanliness of their sashimi cuts, their elaborated fusion cuisine and the ever-changing tasting menu is a trip of colors and incomparable flavours.

What's one dish you always want to introduce to visitors?

[Ceviche](#) is our flag dish. At its most basic version is presented on raw fish, pepper, salt and lemon juice. It's a simple dish, but every chef has their own tweaked version varying not only on the ingredients but also the process of making it. The most renowned is **Chef Wong** who holds a hidden almost secret like ceviche spot located in Santa Catalina, La Victoria.

What misconceptions do tourists have about Peruvian food?

Tourists often think that everything will be way too spicy for them. The climate and biodiversity allow us to grow plenty of pepper types with different types of function, flavour and color in our cuisine.

What should people look for in a gastro/cultural tour or class?

They look for a good balance between cultural a culinary activities, not only demonstration, they look for hands-on classes, recipe books and techniques.

Any favourite food & travel books?

It is hard to choose from the big variety of food books that Peru has to offer, most of them are in Spanish. In English, the [Peruvian Cuisine book by Tony Custer](#) is a classic Vol 1 and 2 and are in English it showcases main basic recipes of Peruvian Cuisine. Rafael Osterling' book is also very good.

