

AROUND THE WORLD



CARLOS CLIMBS THE LADDER



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A scenic view of a stone terraced hillside with a dirt path and several llamas grazing in the foreground. The text "WELCOME TO PERU" is overlaid in large white letters.

WELCOME TO PERU



Ecuador

Colombia

Brazil

Peru

Lima



Bolivia

Chile

From its sprawling mountain landscapes to its lush evergreen rainforests, the South American nation of Peru — the third largest country after Brazil and Argentina — is known for its diverse geography as well as its overflowing natural resources.



The gigantic Andes Mountain Range runs parallel to Peru's coastline and divides the country into very different regions, each one with its own unique climate and topography. On the western side of the Andes, between the mountains and the Pacific Ocean, lies a long, thin strip of desert that holds the country's large modern population centers, like its capital city, Lima. Making up only about 10% of the country, the coastal desert is where about half of all Peruvians live.

To the east of the mountains is the massive Amazon rainforest, home to hundreds of species of animals, some of which can only be found in this area of the world. In between are the Andean highlands, where you can find some of Earth's tallest mountains, most of Peru's **indigenous** population, its famous past, and most importantly, its bountiful natural resources.

Indigenous

People who have lived on a land from its earliest time and maintain a distinct cultural identity.





Filled with **minerals** like gold, silver, copper, lead, iron, and zinc, the highlands of Peru contain some of the most valuable land in the world, however they are also home to desperately poor and indigenous populations. Peru's contradiction of impoverished people living on wealthy land has been a long and enduring issue. The country's potential seems limitless, but **income mobility** continues to be a pressing issue for the Peruvian people.

Minerals

Naturally occurring materials that can be mined from the earth and used for manufacturing, infrastructure, and many other things that make our modern world possible. For example: gold, silver, copper, lead, iron, and zinc.

Income Mobility

The ability of individuals or families to move up the income ladder over time.

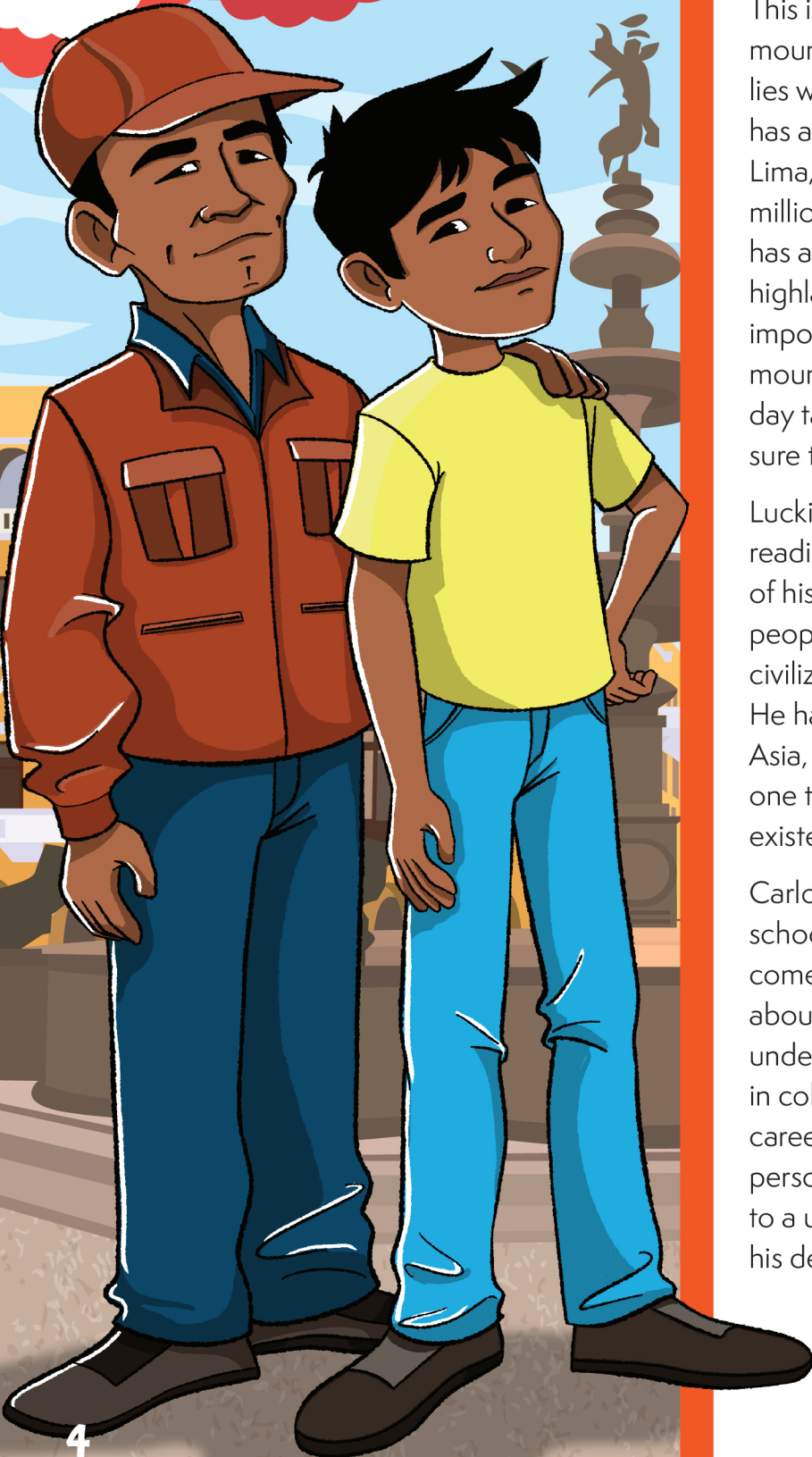


Meet Carlos

This is Carlos. He lives with his family in the mountain highlands region of Apurimac, which lies west of Peru's ancient city of Cuzco. Carlos has always wanted to move to a big city like Lima, Peru's enormous capital city of about 10 million people, but he knows that his family has already come a long way, even in the highlands. His dad, Alejandro, works for an important copper mining company up in the mountains. Carlos's mom, Elba, keeps busy all day taking care of her five children and making sure they always finish their homework.

Luckily, Carlos is an excellent student. He loves reading stories about the ancient civilizations of his region's past — the Moche and Chimu people. He especially loves studying past civilizations that expanded into great empires. He has books about conquerors from Europe, Asia, and even Africa, but the most exciting one to him is the mighty empire that once existed in the Andes, the Inca.

Carlos is very excited for his last year of high school, though he's a bit nervous about what comes after that. He has always loved learning about history and geology, but he is still undecided about what he would like to study in college and needs to figure out what his career path will be. Carlos will be the first person in his family with the opportunity to go to a university, so he wants to make sure that his degree is a useful one.





Peru's Great Gifts

Carlos loves his grandfather, Yachay. As a direct descendant of the Inca, Yachay is Quechua. In fact, his name means “wisdom” in the **Quechua** language, and Yachay lives up to this name. He is hard working, loving, and full of good advice.

Carlos especially loves listening to his grandfather's many stories. Yachay often tells his grandchildren fascinating tales of their Incan ancestry and of the great gifts of their homeland. He teaches them about how indigenous people, like the Moche, Chimu, and Inca, were the first people to harness the great wealth of natural resources in Peru, building mines and extracting gold, silver, copper, and tin. He is especially proud of the fact that the Inca developed sophisticated mining techniques and even used **hydraulic mining** to harvest these minerals from the earth.



Quechua

A term referring to the indigenous people of the Andean region of South America (particularly in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Argentina, and Chile) with direct ancestral ties to the Inca, and the language, culture, and traditions associated with them.

Hydraulic Mining

A method of extracting minerals using water to dislodge rocks and sediments.

The Inca

The Indigenous Empire of the Andes

The Inca began as a small Andean tribe living around modern-day Cuzco. During the 15th and 16th centuries, thanks to a series of powerful kings and incredible engineers, the Inca expanded their kingdom over what is now Peru and extended it up and down the Andes. Before Europeans arrived in the New World, the Inca held the largest ever empire in the Americas, and Cuzco was their most important city.

The Inca were incredible builders of roads, walls, and buildings, and modern Cuzco remains filled with Incan-made structures that are over 500 years old. The Inca builders are most well known for the world-famous **Inca Trail** up to the legendary city in the sky — **Machu Picchu**.

Explorers from Spain reached Inca territory in the 1520s, and it quickly was clear to them that they had come to a bountiful land with prospects of great wealth. A decades-long battle for control over their empire began, and after being weakened by a civil war and diseases, the Inca were eventually defeated by the Spaniards.

Inca Trail

The 26-mile hiking trail that leads to the ancient Inca city of Machu Picchu; hikers get to experience mountain and jungle scenery, as well as a wide mix of Inca ruins and tunnels.



Most of the native people eventually adopted the Spanish religion, Christianity, as well as the Spanish dialect, Castellano, which is still the official language spoken in Peru. But many traditional ways of life continue to live on. Today, more than 20% of Peru's population is Quechua, and even though many have moved from small highland villages to bigger towns and cities, large numbers remain on their traditional lands. Most are very poor, and many even live without plumbing and electricity. Their communities are reliant on small farms, keep herds of llamas, and follow a unique blend of Catholic and native traditions.

Machu Picchu

One of the Seven Wonders of the World; an ancient city with over 150 buildings that was occupied around 1420–1530 AD at the height of the Inca Empire. It is believed to have been built for an ancient Incan emperor before it was abandoned due to the Spanish conquests, but its purpose remains unknown to this day.





Mining Changes Yachay's Life

One reason Yachay is so proud of his people's mining heritage is that mining has changed the trajectory of his family's lives.

Yachay spent most of his life herding llamas in his little Quechua village. His farm was in a rural area with limited access to basic services like electricity, water, or sanitation. There were very few ways to make money and even fewer options for education for Yachay's children. Like the rest of his neighbors, he kept waiting for the government or one of the big mining companies to send his people some money and save them from the downward spiral in which they were caught. Without the essentials needed to move up the ladder toward prosperity, he went to bed every night worrying about how he would feed and take care of his family.

All of this changed when Yachay decided to take a full-time job doing basic maintenance and repair for a new mining company in the mountains. The steady work and consistent pay allowed Yachay to provide consistently for his family and helped them break out of their cycle of poverty.

Yachay has worked long enough for the mining industry in Peru to see government administrations come and go. Some have been hard on the mines, but more recently they have been very favorable toward the work, even allowing private mining businesses to invest and provide jobs for the rural Peruvian communities. Yachay does not keep up with all of the political changes, but he knows that when the government is less controlling, his company has done well, resulting in better pay and more opportunities for his family.



Economic Freedom = More Opportunities

Not very long ago, Peru was an extremely poor country, but that began changing thanks to a different relationship between mining and the country's government. For decades, the country had been led by **socialist** governments that tightly controlled the nation's mines through a **planned economy**. Socialist governments try to tackle the issues of income disparity by redistributing wealth through government programs and high taxes. This however disincentivizes work and productivity, reduces economic growth, decreases competitiveness, and encourages dependency among the population. The famous American economist Thomas Sowell stated it this way, "Many attempts at **redistributing wealth** . . . have ended up redistributing poverty." The results of this approach in Peru were no exception.

However, beginning in the 1990s, the government gave up control of the mining industry, and private businesses — both from inside Peru and around the world — were free to operate the mines. The results were astounding. Under socialism, there had been many rules and regulations that prevented Peru's mines from being as profitable as they could be, but with new **free market** policies, the industry began to thrive. Investments from all over the world started pouring in and fueling Peru's economy. Life for many Peruvians improved — millions were lifted from poverty, and a new middle class began to grow.



Socialism

An economic and political system that seeks collective ownership and control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of goods and services.

Planned Economy

An economic system in which the government controls the production and distribution of resources, goods, and services.

Redistributing Wealth

The process of transferring resources (such as money and property) from one group or individual to another through government policies.

Free Market Economy

An economic system in which the production and distribution of resources, goods, and services are controlled by supply and demand in a competitive marketplace with limited to no government control.



Following in Yachay's Footsteps

Carlos's dad, Alejandro, works for the same copper mining company as Yachay. At first, he joined the maintenance team too, but over the years he has picked up other valuable skills.

Their employer is a top mining company in Peru that produces around 300,000 tons of copper per year — about 2% of the entire world's copper. It is an important job because copper is used to make special wire that brings electricity to houses, factories, and all other electrical devices. Mining has always been good work, primarily because it contributes significantly to the Peruvian economy, representing 16% of the national **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**. Peru's wealth of natural resources creates abundant opportunity for its people and draws significant interest from both foreign and domestic mining operations who would like to profit from the rich ores Peru has to offer. Countries like England, China, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, and the United States all have mining companies in Peru, which contribute a great deal to the economy.

Alejandro is very happy to follow in his father's footsteps by working for a company that produces a material that is in high demand. He also enjoys building on the family legacy, as he has moved up from a maintenance position, like Yachay, and into the more skilled position of heavy equipment operation. This gives him a sense of satisfaction because he is able to provide a stable life for his family with a nice home, basic services, and benefits that provide for the healthcare and education of his wife and children.



Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

A measure used to evaluate the health of a country's economy. It is the total value of the goods and services produced in a country during a specific period of time, usually a year.



Work at the mine has enabled the family to become **socially mobile**. Alejandro hopes that the education and example he is providing his children will enable them to overcome the **income disparity** present in Peru.

Thanks to Alejandro's hard work, his children have been able to attend very good schools, and it fills him with pride to know that attending a university is finally a real possibility for someone in the family. He is hopeful that Carlos will follow in his father and grandfather's footsteps and make even greater strides toward success.

Socially Mobile

The ability of an individual or a family to move up or down the social ladder over the course of their lifetime or between generations.

Income Disparity

The difference in income between different individuals or groups within a society.





Protests, Riots, & Mine Closures

Carlos has always loved visiting his father at work, and before his next school year starts, he wants to take advantage of every opportunity he can get to spend time with Alejandro at the copper mine. Carlos's last visit started off just like every other visit, until...*CRASH! BANG! BOOM!*

What was happening?! Loud, angry voices could be heard throughout the facility. Protestors were storming the mine! Through the chaos, Carlos could hear their chants. Carlos's head immediately filled with a barrage of questions. Alejandro explained that his longtime fear was coming true again.

Large mining operations have often been a source of conflict in Peru. Alejandro's mine was the site of protests and riots in 2016. The mine is located on land inhabited by indigenous communities. When the company was first established, it made an agreement with the local indigenous community, but later the people changed their minds. More recently, political crises have arisen in the Peruvian government. Weeks of violent turmoil have resulted in the closure of mines at a loss of 25,000 tons of copper production each month the mine is closed. Each time the mine is shut it jeopardizes Alejandro's livelihood.



Carlos and Alejandro quickly hopped into their car to drive home from the chaos. Carlos looked back at the mine as his father drove them away. He could see that some protestors were setting up camps, while others were destroying the machinery used for the mine's everyday operations. The people did not look like locals, so he wondered where they had all come from. Why had they targeted this mine? How will it be able to function with so much damage and all those people in the way? If the mine has to stop production, how will that affect Peru's economy? Will the miners still get paid, and if they don't, how might that affect their families? It was like a chain reaction — one domino making the next one topple over, leading to one gigantic mess. Carlos's heart sank. As they drove farther and farther away from the mine, the protestors and the havoc they were creating faded in the distance, but Carlos could not stop thinking... and worrying...





Political Stability = More Opportunities

In December of 2022, recently elected Peruvian President Pedro Castillo shocked Peru when he attempted to stage a **coup d'état**. In a speech on national television, he declared his plan to dissolve Congress and establish a new government, which he would **rule by decree**. Shortly after his declaration, he was impeached and arrested. His second-in-command Vice President Dina Boluarte became the new president. When Castillo's loyal supporters learned that their president had been impeached, they felt betrayed. He had promised to take care of them, so they believed he was their only hope. The only move they felt they had left was to make their anger known by taking to the streets in protest. Tens of thousands of people obstructed roads and highways with large rocks and even tires they had set on fire — anything they could find to shut down the streets.

Economic freedom plays an important part in creating more opportunities for people, but so does political stability. A healthy and consistent government creates the right environment for business, investors, and individuals to flourish. When the government is stable and predictable, it can enforce laws and protect businesses, investors, and individuals from insecurity. **Corruption**, protests, riots, and violence all hinder this process. A stable government creates a favorable business climate by reducing corruption, ensuring peace through the rule of law, minimizing **bureaucracy**, and providing incentives for businesses to invest and expand. All of these factors can contribute to a thriving economy with more opportunities for individuals to succeed and advance their livelihoods through hard work.

Coup D'état

A sudden, violent, and unlawful seizure of power from a government.

Rule by Decree

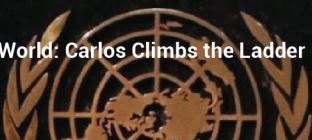
Used mostly by dictators, a style of governance allowing quick, unchallenged creation of law without approval by a legislative assembly.

Corruption

The misuse of the proper functions of government for inappropriate or illegal private gain.

Bureaucracy

A system of organization where decisions are made by a large number of officials through a complex and hierarchical structure of rules and procedures. Bureaucracy is often associated with slow and inefficient processes and lack of flexibility.



A Hopeful Future for Carlos and for Peru

Carlos has started his last year of high school, and even though a new school year is always filled with many emotions, the fear and anger from the protest at the copper mine are still very vivid in his memory. The mine had to shut down production for several weeks, which cost the company a lot of money. In fact, due to the violence, the mine lost nearly 30% of its copper output. The shutdown ultimately hurt everyone — the mine, the economy, and the citizens.

Through experiencing the disruption at the mine in person, Carlos better understands why mining is so important to his father and grandfather. The lost work and wages really hurt his family, and he could sense the fear and worry that his dad felt. He watched his dad pray daily about the situation with the protesters. Carlos gained a greater understanding of what the work in the mine

provided for him and his family and a greater appreciation for the opportunities he now has. Carlos has finally made up his mind about what he would like to study in college next year. Inspired by his grandfather and father's noble efforts at the mine, Carlos wants to continue to climb the ladder they have set before him; he wants to follow their example and take classes in Geology and Engineering so that he can be a mining engineer and perhaps one day lead his own mining company. Beyond his personal family interests, Carlos wants the economy and his fellow Peruvians to thrive and he hopes that his example, like that of his father and his grandfather before him, will open a way for others through hard work in a politically secure and economically free nation. Until then, Carlos is diligent at school earning good grades in all his classes and taking advantage of the opportunities before him.





Writing Activity

Think of some ways that your life is better than your parents' or grandparents' lives at your age. Do you have opportunities that they didn't have? Write about how far your family has come over the generations and conclude with what you hope to do in order to improve the lives of the next generation.

Traditional Recipe for

Papa a la Huancaína (serves 4)

Whenever Carlos comes home from school and hears his mom running the blender, he knows the odds are high that she is making one of his favorite dishes, papa a la Huancaína. Translated to Huancayo-style potatoes (Huancayo being a city located east of Lima, in Central Peru), this appetizer is very popular in Peru because of its delicious creamy cheese sauce served atop boiled and sliced yellow potatoes. With your parents' help, grab a blender and learn how to make this traditional Peruvian food.

Ingredients:

- ½ cup aji amarillo paste (*which can be found in the Latin foods section in most grocery stores*)
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 8 oz. queso fresco
- 4 soda crackers
- salt to taste
- 4-5 yellow potatoes, peeled, boiled, and sliced

Garnishes:

- Iceberg lettuce leaves
- 2-3 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and cut in slices
- black olives
- parsley sprigs

Directions:

With your parents' help, carefully put the aji amarillo paste in the blender. Add the milk and oil, and blend with the queso fresco, crackers, and salt, until you've made a smooth cream sauce. If the sauce is too runny, add more crackers.

Place four lettuce leaves on four plates. Add some thick potato slices, and pour the sauce over the potatoes.

Garnish and serve with black olives, thinly sliced hard boiled eggs, and a few sprigs of parsley.

Enjoy!



Find Your Way Through Machu Picchu



Interesting Facts

Peru is divided into 3 regions — the coast, the mountains, and the jungle.

Each region has its own specific foods and traditions.



The Coast:

The coast has arid deserts, long stretches of beaches, and lush valleys.

Music and Dance: Coastal music is heavily influenced by Afro-Peruvian rhythms, called festejo, featuring instruments like the cajón (a wooden box drum) and guitar. Marinera, a graceful and elegant dance native to the coastal region, is believed to have originated during the colonial period.

The Jungle (Amazon Rainforest):

The jungle region has dense rainforests, winding rivers (including the Amazon River), and vibrant plants and animals.

Culture: Indigenous cultures, such as the Shipibo, Ashaninka, and Ese Eja, have a strong presence in the jungle region. Shamanism and traditional healing practices are an integral part of the local culture.

Food: Jungle cuisine includes unique dishes like juanes (rice and meat wrapped in banana leaves) and tacacho (mashed plantains with pork rinds).



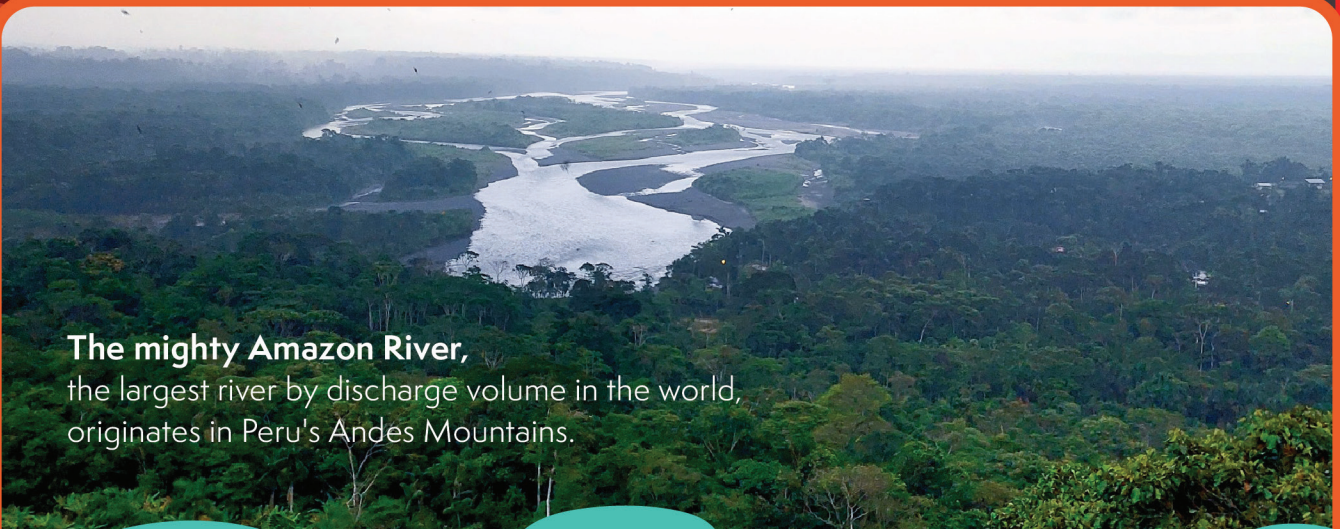
The Mountains (Andes):

The mountain region is home to the majestic Andes Mountains, deep valleys, and high-altitude plateaus.

Music: Traditional Andean music features instruments like the pan flute, charango (small guitar-like instrument), and the quena (bamboo flute).

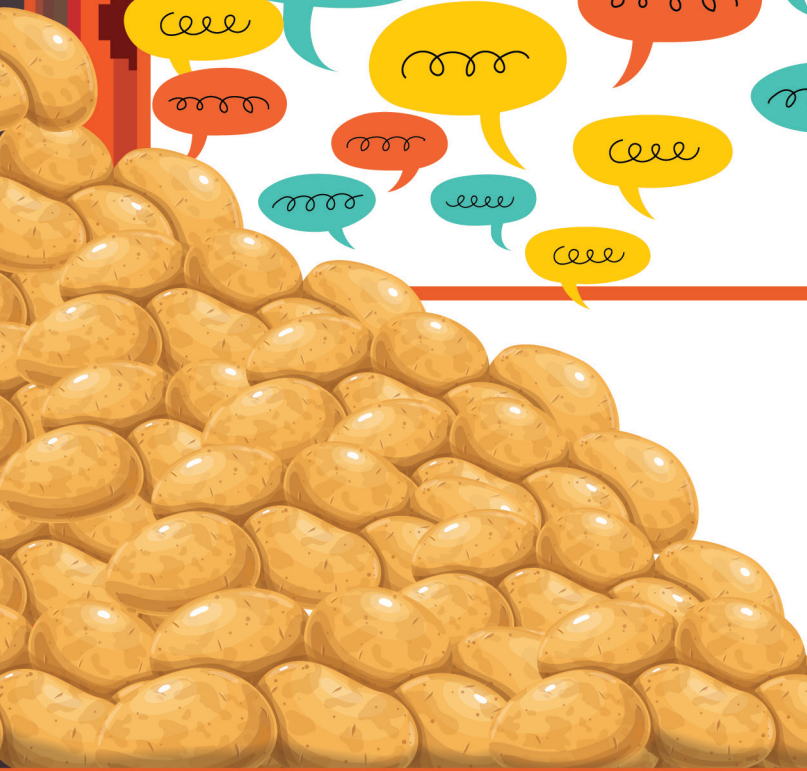
Food: Andean cuisine incorporates staples like potatoes, quinoa, corn, and alpaca meat. Cuy, or guinea pig, is a delicacy in the Andean mountains.





The mighty Amazon River, the largest river by discharge volume in the world, originates in Peru's Andes Mountains.

Over 80 dialects are spoken in Peru. Quechua is the most commonly spoken language after Spanish.

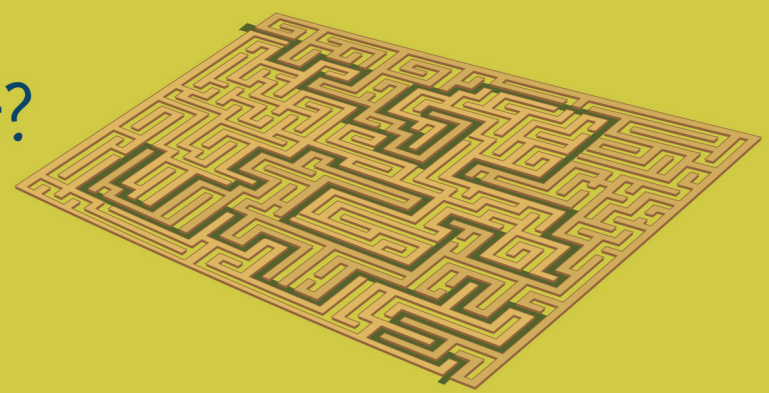


Peru is home to over **4,000** potato types.



Did You Make It?

Here's how to find your way through Machu Picchu.



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An illustration of five diverse cartoon characters standing in front of a world map. From left to right: a man in a dark military uniform with a peaked cap and medals; a boy in a blue and white soccer jersey with the number 30; a girl with long brown hair in a blue top and yellow skirt; a girl with dark skin and braided hair in a yellow top and patterned skirt; and a boy in an orange t-shirt and dark shorts. The background is a blue world map.

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