

PREPARING FOR YOUR ADVENTURE TO SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA

It's not long now until you'll be on your way to awe-inspiring South and Central America. The information provided below is to help you prepare for travel to this part of the world and to ensure you have the best possible holiday.

SOME INFORMATION ON OUR GUIDES

Each country we visit in South and Central America has their own unique culture and intriguing history, making each one an incredibly interesting and fascinating destination in its own right. With this in mind, we generally prefer to use locally based national guides, and sometimes specialist local guides for particular regions or attractions. While all our guides are well-trained and fully qualified, it's their love and passion for their country that makes the history and special culture come alive, in turn, making your touring experience unforgettable for all the right reasons!

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS

Your guide is not there simply to move you around from place to place... in fact, they are a wealth of knowledge about the area you are visiting! Many have grown up in the region and have studied hard to become a tour guide and are beyond proud to share their local area with you.

FITNESS

Let's talk fitness... a Bunnik Tour is for independently minded travellers with good levels of mobility. We want to ensure that all our guests enjoy their trip, not struggle through it. Our South and Central America tours are designed to soak in as much of the local atmosphere as possible, which will usually involve a walking tour of several hours, often over uneven streets, up and down stairs, inclines, narrow walkways and rugged terrain. Your ability to walk unaided for this length of time, and also to be able to carry your own luggage is imperative. Our firm fitness guidelines are for your safety, as well as the safety of your fellow travellers. Further details can be found on our website www.bunniktours.com.au under the 'Info' banner.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES & EXPECTATIONS

Every country we visit will have its own unique cultural differences that make travel such a wonderful, mind broadening experience. In South and Central America, the cultural differences can be dramatic (even between countries) and we find they can cause quite a bit of culture shock, so it helps to be prepared for the unexpected! Here, it also pays to be a little more careful with water cleanliness and food hygiene.

BORDER CROSSINGS

Depending what countries in South America we are travelling between, sometimes it will be necessary to complete border formalities. When flying between countries while on tour, border formalities are taken care of upon flight check in, however, sometimes we cross international borders by land, when we're on the coach. This process usually involves passing through check points and completing border procedures for both countries. In some circumstances, this process can take some time, depending on the amount of people crossing the border at any one time. Please note at land border crossings that taking any photographs or videos is considered illegal and if caught doing so, you can find yourself in very hot water with the local border officials.

INTERNAL FLIGHTS IN SOUTH AMERICA

When flying throughout South America, depending on the country and the schedule, Bunnik Tours uses a local airline. With any airline, schedules and timings are always subject to change, however some of the South American airlines are notorious for making last minute changes (and some are notorious for being on schedule, down to the minute!). We book and secure flights to ensure the best possibility of reaching our next destination in plenty of time and with minimal impact to our itinerary, just in case there is a change to the expected flight time. Please understand that any unforeseen airline changes or cancellations are out of our hands.

LUGGAGE REQUIREMENTS

A smaller overnight bag is required on multiple tours throughout South America. For example, on overnight train journeys, where it is not possible to access your big suitcase, or for a one night stay in a location where it is too difficult to bring your suitcase. If this applies to you, further information will be available in your tour documentation.

MACHU PICCHU

Unsurprisingly, Machu Picchu is at the top of everyone's bucket list for those considering a trip to South America and has recently seen a rise in visitors. The Peruvian government has therefore adopted some guidelines to preserve their national treasures and to control the number of visitors entering the site at any one time. Entry to Machu Picchu is now based on the time of our booking (for example, if our booking is at 1pm, we won't be able to take the coach at 9am).

Bunnik Tours stays overnight in Aguas Calientes meaning we have the opportunity to return to Machu Picchu early the following morning. For this optional second visit, we will need to buy a new entry ticket and new coach ticket which need to be pre-booked before the tour begins. Unfortunately, if you are unable to use your second morning ticket, you won't receive a refund.

DOLLARS & SENSE

Some South and Central American currencies can be very difficult or impossible to find in Australia, so we recommend exchanging local currency at the arrival airport. We also suggest departing Australia with at least a couple of hundred dollars in USD currency in smaller denominations. This will be particularly useful in Argentina where the rate of exchange received for USD cash is much higher than the official exchange rate provided by the banks. It will be far more expensive to pay using credit cards to withdraw cash from ATM's in Argentina than to use cash. ATM access in South and Central America is quite widespread in major cities and towns and outside of Argentina is a good way to access cash if required. If you need to exchange more USD currency later in the trip, your tour director will be able to advise you on the best places to do so.

We also recommend getting small denominations in case you have to pay to use a public toilet, or to buy yourself a drink or a snack from a local vendor.

WATER & SOFT DRINKS IN SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA

Unfortunately, unless you want a sore tummy, tap water is not safe to drink in South and Central America. Bottled water and other beverages are sold almost everywhere. Generally speaking, you will be provided with a bottle of water upon arrival from your flight and sometimes, one is provided per person in your hotel room.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

We suggest informing your Travel Specialist of any dietary restrictions you may have prior to departure. It is also helpful to translate your dietary requirements into the local language of your destination (Google Translate is a handy tool for this). Keeping a printed or photographed copy of the translation can aid in communicating your needs to waiting staff. It's important to keep in mind that local restaurants may have difficulty catering to specific dietary needs, especially gluten-free, celiac or vegan preferences. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that all meals served will be free from allergens.

TEA & COFFEE MAKING FACILITIES

Many hotels in South and Central America do not provide tea and coffee making facilities in your room. If you would like to enjoy a tea or coffee in your room, we suggest packing a travel kettle or portable heat immersion element along with your favourite teabags and coffee.

OPTIONAL TOURS

The optional tours listed are a collection of what can be enjoyed during your free time in various places but this is time permitting and they cannot be guaranteed. Should something especially interest you please mention to your tour director or guide at the beginning of your tour or arrival into the specific country. All prices listed are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.

WI-FI

In most hotels there will be Wi-Fi available free of charge.

WHISPERS

In Peru your tour director may use the Whisper technology system. Each person is provided with a small device and earphones, allowing the tour director to speak into a small microphone that you can adjust to your preferred volume. This ensures that everyone can hear the information, regardless of where you are standing in relation to the guide, and also prevents disturbing other visitors.

ISSUES ON TOUR

Should you encounter any issues whilst on tour, we encourage you to discuss it with your tour director or contact Bunnik Tours as soon as possible. Any problems are best discussed and rectified at the time they occur to ensure you and everyone else can enjoy their time on tour.

CAMERA & VIDEO FEES

We have found that sometimes fees can apply for taking photos or videos (using cameras and mobile phones) at certain tourist sites. The fees are dependent on the location and can be paid in the local currency. Your guide can assist you with this.

TOUR FACTS & TIPS

For each country we visit, we've put together some handy facts and tips on things like local etiquette, what to wear, currency and dining. Head to our [Tour Facts & Tips page](#) to find out more.

KEEP AN OPEN MIND!

To get the best out of your holiday, keep an open mind. The best memories come your way when you take everything in your stride and enjoy the unique experience of travelling through some of the most interesting places in the world.

We wish you a truly wonderful journey in this fascinating part of the world!