

From Lima to the Sacred Valley: 9 Must-Try Peruvian Dishes & Drinks

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Machu Picchu, the Andes, and other historic and natural wonders have traditionally landed Peru on many travelers' bucket lists. But recently, the country's longstanding culinary offerings have gained much-deserved international buzz from acclaimed food critics and tourists alike. On a recent customized food-and-culture trip with tour packager [JoumeYou](#), we sampled dozens of local specialties prepared in high-end restaurants, relaxed eateries, and local homes. Here are nine of the tastiest highlights.



Lomo saltado – Chifa, a fusion of Chinese cooking methods with Peruvian flavors, offers a variety of dishes including lomo saltado. Here, juicy sirloin strips, bell peppers, onions, soy sauce, and plenty of spices are stir-fried and served with rice and potato wedges.



Causa rellena – Layers of boiled gold potato and chicken salad are topped with thin slices of avocado and hard-boiled egg in causa rellena, an ideal lunch if you're seeking out a light bite. Served at room temperature, causa rellena is typically prepared in a large pie-like circle then sliced up to share; we loved the individual-sized portions at [El Señorío de Sulco](#) in Lima's Miraflores neighborhood.



Ceviche – Nowhere does Peru's national dish taste better than Lima, thanks to the capital city's direct access to the rich bounty of the Pacific Ocean. Fresh-caught fish (usually sea bass) is chopped into cubes and mixed with a few generous squeezes of lime, a pinch of sea salt, thinly sliced onions, chilies, and pepper. Fun fact: The juice from ceviche — known as tiger milk — is thought to be a hangover cure and aphrodisiac.



Adobo cusqueno – This hearty pork-based dinner entrée, found in and around restaurants in Cusco (we loved the [Map Café](#)'s take on it), makes for the ideal comfort meal on chilly mountain nights. Gold potato puree allows you to sop up every last drop of spicy marinade.



Tropical fruits – Dozens of tropical fruit varieties are grown in Peru's slice of the Amazon rainforest. If you're unable to fit this area into your itinerary, head to the fruit stand at Mercado Municipal de San Isidro for some of the best picks. Make sure to try the melon-like pepino; aguaymanto, a Peruvian cherry tomato; lucuma, a butterscotch-flavored fruit used as a primary ingredient in many deserts; and guanabana, a large fruit with green scales on the outside and white flesh on the inside that tastes similar to cotton candy.



Pisco sour – Parts lemon juice, egg white, simple syrup, and Pisco, a South American brandy, the Peruvian version of this drink is also finished off with drops of Angostura bitters to cut the egg white. This perfectly tart cocktail originated in Lima, but may be found at restaurants and bars around the country.



Chica morada – The Peruvian palate leans towards sweet flavors, and this non-alcoholic, purple com-based beverage is no exception. Traditionally, the com is boiled in water with pineapple; sugar, cinnamon, and cloves are added for flavor when the liquid cools. The drink is a Peruvian staple and can be found at most restaurants. For an extra kick, ask for the alcoholic version which undergoes fermentation.



Guinea pig – It may be difficult to imagine your fuzzy childhood pet as a dinner dish, but the protein-rich guinea pig is traditionally served on special occasions in Peruvian culture. While it's prepared in a variety of fashions, we recommend the smaller, appetizer-sized serving at [Wayra Restaurant](#) in the Sacred Valley. Fried strips are served with a creamy dipping sauce and potatoes.