

Tips for your Semester in Perú



**Con cariño,
El grupo del año 2013**

Queridos compañeros,

Congratulations! You will soon embark on the adventure of a lifetime. Treat every day as exactly that—an adventure. You will be blessed daily with opportunities to invest in new relationships, immerse in a new culture, and grow closer our powerful, loving, and unchanging God. “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7 NLT.) Take this verse to heart as you face each challenge and triumph on the road ahead.

Throughout it all, we from the 2013 group have your backs. This is a compilation of tips that we wrote for you while we were there. It is a lot of information, so don’t let it overwhelm you. Know that the individual that wrote any given journal is mostly speaking from his/her own perspective and experience, and that things may differ from person to person. While I hope you will find this helpful throughout the semester, don’t let it keep you from exploring and finding things out on your own, even if it entails a bit of a struggle. Often that’s when you learn the most. Be open to new things. Learn from those around you. Ask questions. Pray.

All the best,
Lori

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What to Bring

Carmen De Boer

Here are some suggestions from myself and the group. You might have to pick and choose because you run out of luggage space, but don't let that stress you out. Remember, most of this stuff CAN be bought in Peru, but in some cases is more expensive or harder to find. NOTE: Be sure to also check out the packing list in the Peru Student Handbook!

- **Tennis shoes:** If you plan to exercise at all, bring them. I used mine a lot when training for Misti.
- **Hiking boots:** I used them to climb Misti, when traveling, and with a lot of the walking I do here.
- **Stylish jacket and boots/shoes:** It was good to have a cuter pair of warm shoes and a nicer jacket when walking around town or going out at night, for something less outdoorsy.
- **Slippers/flip flops:** Nice to have whether you have cold feet because carpet is not common here, or to give your toes a breather on hot days. People do NOT take their shoes off in houses like we're used to.
- **Warmer coat/jacket:** When we arrived in Peru it felt like fall (actually winter was just ending), so in the mornings and nights I was constantly wishing for a warm fleece, or fall-like jacket.
- **Warm PJs:** It's colder here at night than you would think.
- **Capri work-out pants:** This is important for any girls wanting to do the volleyball *taller* (workshop) or other sports. They don't really wear shorts.
- **Sweat pants:** For lounging, or when going somewhere to work out in shorts.
- **Some clothes you could leave behind:** After 4 months of the same few items, you might be sick of them, wear them out, or want to make more room in your suitcase. Donate them!
- **Long skirt/dress:** Girls don't really wear them to class, but don't be afraid to as long as it's modest. You could wear it for a class presentation, or if you go to a more formal event with your family, or at the goodbye party at the end of the semester. It depends on the situation, but I could have gone the entire semester without wearing mine.
- **Things to climb Misti:** Things like hats, gloves, coats, etc. were included in the price, but boots and hiking backpacks were extra to rent.
- **Carry on bigger than a school backpack:** Even if you have extra luggage space going to Peru, you will use that space to get your stuff back to the U.S. You will also use it for the free week and excursions. I recommend that this carry-on be a backpacking pack because you can then use it for Misti, and during the free week and excursions it can be nicer than a suitcase with wheels.
- **Bag for around the city:** It's nice to have a purse or drawstring backpack.
- **Water bottle:** A necessity for travel and daily use. Bring one that you love and know won't leak.
- **Notebook/journal:** Usually more costly in Peru. If you have a favorite journal, definitely bring it.
- **Playing cards**
- **Flash drive:** Necessity to print things.
- **Poster putty:** If you want to hang pictures in your room.
- **Vaseline or lotion:** It is such a dry climate so this comes in handy.
- **Bug repellent:** The university lawn is right by the Chili River, which attracts bugs. If you go to the rainforest, you will definitely want some.
- **Travel-sized toiletries:** Nice to have for the airports, excursions, and the free week.
- **Band-aids (first aid kit)**
- **Peanut butter (or comfort food):** Once I got to Peru and it wasn't much of an option, then I wanted it all the more, and will eat it by the spoonful when I return to the U.S.
- **Baking ingredients:** Some ingredients such as chocolate chips, M&Ms, pumpkin pie filling (for Thanksgiving!), etc. are hard to find or expensive here

Etiquette and Courtesy

Christine Lim

Adjusting and submerging yourself into the Peruvian culture and society is a gradual process. You will face challenges and most certainly make mistakes along the way. But at the same time, there is honestly nothing that can compare to this beautiful, eye-opening experience. I am writing this based upon my own experiences and those of my fellow Peru '13 *compañeros* in the hope that I can provide some useful information when it comes to dealing with rules and social etiquette, mostly unspoken, in Peru and Arequipa.

Much of what we learned about developing good manners when we were young applies to life in Arequipa. But it is important to note several cultural differences between Peru and the United States. In Peru, greetings (with both friends and first-time acquaintances) are done with a simple kiss on the right cheek (so it means going to the left!). It is actually more like a light touching of the cheeks, which will probably make a better first impression than giving a full-on smooch on the lips. This is done between females, and female to male, but a firm handshake takes place between males. This custom may seem a little foreign at first, but will become natural over time. To me, this style of greeting simply illustrates the warm, embracing hospitality of the Peruvian culture.

It is often polite to acknowledge the owner(s) or worker(s) when you enter a store, coffee shop, etc. with a simple "*Buenos(as) dias/tardes/noches,*" excuse yourself when needed, and to thank a person for their service, whether it be a taxi driver or the cashier at your favorite *panadería*. If you don't look Peruvian (which most of you won't), you will likely receive stares and even comments when you are walking about in the city. It is best not to react, especially one of confrontation or ill manners, but rather to simply tolerate and understand the situation as best as you can. People will come up to you and try to sell items or entice you to enter their establishment. Don't be afraid to politely decline with a "*no, gracias*" and keep on walking.

The level of formality in Peru is higher than in the United States. Note that at the university, when the professor enters the classroom, students stand up until he or she signals everybody to sit back down. At meals it is polite to wait until everybody is served before eating and usually best to wait until everybody has finished if you must excuse yourself early. Peruvian Spanish uses the informal "*tú*" and the formal "*usted*." There is no concrete rule about when to use which. It depends on the situation and your relationship with the person being addressed. "*Tú*" is used between friends and with those younger than you; "*Usted*" should be used with your professors, those you meet for the first time and are clearly older than you, and others in authority positions. It is respectful to address *desconocidos* and those in public places, such as waiters or taxi drivers, with "*usted*"—after all, they are serving you! If you want to make a good impression on your host parents, use "*usted*" when you are first adjusting and getting to know them. You can switch to the "*tú*" form once you feel that you have developed familiarity and trust in the relationship. Many Peruvian children address their parents informally because it demonstrates the closeness and *cariño* of their relationship.

North American culture values assertiveness and direct communication, whereas Peruvians are often more indirect, so be considerate of this in your interactions. Also, because our level and comprehension of Spanish likely is not fluent, especially in the beginning of the semester, it can be tempting to simply tune out or withdraw from a conversation if it is difficult to follow or seems irrelevant. However, I encourage you to make an effort and wholly engage in conversation because you never know what you might discover along the way. You will inevitably make some cultural blunders, but I have found that Peruvians are very forgiving and accepting, and if you have a positive, humble attitude and are willing to learn from your mistakes; then you will always be successful in your cross-cultural transitions and interactions.

Personal Health and What to do if you're Sick

Hannah Kwekel

Before you begin this exhilarating journey, let me give you some helpful information, specifically regarding personal health for a foreign student in Arequipa: you. First things first, DON'T HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF. Odd, I know, but don't believe that you have a better immune system than the other *gringos* around you. As with almost any new country, your body is not used to the microbes and bacteria in Perú. Allow your body at least a month to adjust to the change. Here are a few pointers:

- Street food – Don't consume food or drinks (even boiled drinks) off the street unless it is packaged or is food that you can peel, at least for the first month. Also, when you are sick, even after your body has become accustomed to the new foods, don't eat food off the street. You could risk becoming even more ill (speaking from experience!).
- HYDRATE – Dehydration is very real. During the first couple weeks in Arequipa, drink water constantly. It will help your body get accustomed to the high altitude and keep you from feeling over tired. Bottled water is for sale on nearly every street corner. Buy it or bring your own water with you, whether it is boiled in your home, from a purified tank, or from profe's office.
 - Hand sanitizer – Bring it with you everywhere. It is easy to whip out of a purse or a pocket.

If you do end up becoming sick (expect to get sick at least once), here is a little more advice:

- Simple food poisoning?
 - DRINK constantly, a little at a time. Drink mostly water, but some Sprite or Gatorade would be good choices as well, since they could supply your body with a few calories.
 - Don't eat for close to a full day. Let your system clear itself out. If you feel well afterwards, eat a little bread, soup broth, or maybe a banana.
 - Sleep as much as possible.
 - You should feel well Day 2. Avoid uncooked foods for a few days. Bread = your best friend.
- Longer lasting or more serious sickness or infection?
 - Let your host families know. They want the best for you and they want to help you. Tell Profe Bierling –it is important that she know of your illness as she can offer advice, check how you're doing, and be informed if your host family or family back home has questions.
 - If you are sick for an extended period of time, notify your family back home. It is better that they hear the truth from you than an exaggerated story from someone else. Let them know that you're being taken care of, that there's a doctor at the university, and that Arequipa has good doctors and health facilities. You don't want them to worry.
 - The longer you wait the worse it may get. Ask your host family for doctor recommendations. You can visit the doctor at the university first (it's free) or make an appointment at the clinic.

If you need to visit a clinic, have several hundred soles in cash to pay your bills. Chances are you won't need it all (visits to the clinic are cheaper in Perú), but you will not necessarily be able to pay with a card. Be **sure** to bring your insurance information and personal ID. For more urgent help, go to the emergency room. (Bring what I mentioned above.) It might take several hours; so if possible, bring a water bottle and warm/comfortable clothes. Have them write down your exact diagnosis and treatment on the receipts of services, and keep the receipts. Also, keep receipts of medicines that you buy. They will be needed later as proof of treatment and reimbursement from your insurance company when you get home, if those expenses are covered by your insurance.

You may be asked to complete blood work or stool/urine testing. Drink a lot of water. Stool/urine samples are only usable for 1-1.5 hours, so bring them in ASAP. If you must wait an hour, place the samples in the refrigerator (and warn your family of their contents!).

I sincerely hope you don't become sick, but if you do, keep these tips in mind. Also, remember to stay positive, stay healthy, and have the time of your life. ☺

Faith and Church in Arequipa

Jae Chang

Here in Peru, you will experience ups and downs and moments of praise and distress. As David confesses in Psalm 27, "The LORD is the stronghold of my life- of whom shall I be afraid?" If you put your life in God's hands, you will see how great God is. I hope that you will join in his ministry and meet God here in Peru. I definitely encourage you to participate in local churches here in Arequipa.

Arequipa is a city with strong Catholic tradition. Catholic churches here vary greatly. You will find grand cathedrals with elaborate decorations and traditional masses. There are also more modern churches with less formal services. You will find that many Catholic churches have ways to volunteer and be involved in the community, youth groups, and Bible studies. The UCSP has masses and many volunteering opportunities. Consider making Sunday a family day to go to mass with your host family. If they don't attend mass, ask them to attend with you or find a friend to go with. It is definitely a way to experience God's kingdom in the faith tradition and the culture of Arequipa.

There are also Protestant churches in Arequipa. Though Protestant Christians form a smaller part of the community, these churches are powerful and have great impact in Arequipa. Keep in mind that here in Peru, "*la iglesia protestante*" is a general term used to describe any church that isn't Catholic, like Mormons, Jehovah's Witness, etc. Therefore the term "*la iglesia evangélica*" is more appropriate to use, as it is a term to describe various denominations of the Protestant churches such as Baptist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian. There are currently over 20 Protestant churches in Arequipa. There are worship services, small group meetings, and youth groups, and countless ways to get involved.

In my personal experience, I have attended a Protestant church called *la Iglesia Bautista Fe*, which was a huge part of my life in Peru. I cannot imagine my semester in Peru without the church community. Here is why it was so beneficial for me to be part of this church community:

First, even with the language and cultural barriers, I became a part of the church as "*la hermana Jae*." The fact that we were brothers and sisters in Christ made the relationship different from that of my host family and my Peruvian friends from the university. I had a feeling of belonging in Arequipa.

Second, I identified as Peruvian, not a foreigner. Pastor Peter said, "Jae, you are a Peruvian so come share the gospel with me!" I've had lunch and tea time with friends from the church, watched a soccer game with fellow youth in Pastor John's house, and prepared church worship and events with others. There were opportunities to attend Bible study with pastors, small group meeting with *Las señoritas*, Friday fellowship, Saturday youth group, "*servolución*" (community service), *Manos dulces* (praise and prayer gathering of women) where we were taught how to bake oatmeal raisin cookies, visit nursing homes, share the gospel with prostitutes, and go on mission trips to other parts of Peru.

The church has allowed me to view Peru from a different angle. I learned about brokenness that they have lived. But at the same time, I witnessed how God is working in Arequipa. As the light of Christ enters hearts and people live a new life in Christ, the love of God will spread like a wildfire in Arequipa.

And finally, having a loving community that I could praise God with and lean on in moments of difficulty is a priceless gift. Small things like chatting with pastors and friends after school or playing piano and praising God together are awesome memories. The greatest blessing of this church is that I was able to listen to the Word of God every day and cry out loud in moments of both joy and distress. My passion for God grew and I got inspiration and direction for how to spend my semester.

I've realized that in just four months, I became part of God's church here, and God worked through me to build His Kingdom. 2 Corinthians 9:6 says, "Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." Invest your time in God and be part of the living body of Christ. I can guarantee that your experience will be so much richer praising God together, sharing in times of joy and difficulty, and embracing each other in the love of Christ. Your life will be totally different. Blessings!

Bible Study

Emily Strikwerda

Studying abroad is an amazingly fun experience and provides many once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. Whenever people talk about their experiences, these are the things they mention. However, they often fail to mention that it is an incredibly challenging experience. Studying abroad challenges your beliefs, changes the way you see yourself, and teaches you about the world around you.

Through this growth, it is very important to make sure that you keep up with your spiritual development. In Calvin there are many options to help you with this. It is easy to go to LOFT, dorm worship, floor Bible study, chapel, and more. However, when studying abroad, there are not daily options such as these.

One option that you do have is to start a Bible study with some of the other students in your group. This year, we have four or five leaders who offered to step up and organize Bible study groups. They randomly put all of us into groups and each group was left to choose what they wanted to do. Generally, each group meets once a week. Some groups choose a house to go to each week and prepare food for their meeting. Some groups meet downtown in a restaurant. My group meets in a local park. This way, we don't have to bother our mothers by inviting people over, and we get to enjoy the great outdoors. Each group can also choose whether to speak Spanish or English, as this is a time where conversation might go deeper than our Spanish abilities allow.

Some groups decided to use the Exodus Bible study provided by Calvin, while other groups simply chat about life and their thoughts from the week. My group decided to go through the books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. We read one chapter every week and talk about what sticks out to us. We usually start our meetings talking about how our week went and what has been on our minds lately. Then we read through our chapter for the week and share our thoughts. We end the meetings praying for each other, our Peruvian family and friends, and the people back home.

Every week I look forward to going to Bible study. It is a good time to get to know some people in our group that I don't usually spend time with, as well as hear the thoughts of others. Usually it turns out that we are all feeling the same and can support each other in our struggles and rejoice together in our triumphs. It is also so good to meet together with other Christians because God speaks to me through them.

Also, once a month the entire group meets in the Bierlings' apartment. We worship together, pray together, and read the Bible together. It is such a blessing to have this time to sing songs of praise with others. Sometimes it is hard for me to make it to church on Sundays because it is on the other side of town and there are not many *combis*, so this time has become very special to me. We also celebrate birthdays and eat some kind of a dessert, which is always a plus.

These two options for spiritual development and accountability are something that have really helped me in my time here. These, along with spending time with God on my own, have allowed me to see how God shows up in my everyday life and blesses me. I would highly suggest setting up Bible studies and worship times for your group in Peru.

La familia peruana

Hanna Silvey

My host family was one of the things I was the most nervous about when I arrived in Arequipa. I got randomly placed with some people I didn't know, and had to live with them for the next 4 months. I remember the first morning I slept in my new room, I didn't want to face my family and awkwardly figure out their expectations and talk with them in what little Spanish I had.

I think the first thing to keep in mind about your families is not getting ahead of yourself. For example, I REALLY wanted a family with little kids. I was a camp counselor all summer and I felt like that was all I knew. I ended up getting an older couple with no kids in the house. I was pretty bummed and a little upset. But it turned out being far more wonderful than I could have imagined! So if things aren't what you wanted or expected right away, don't let that frustrate you. Give it time.

Another important thing to know is that you are not bound to your family. If you feel like you are being treated unfairly or there are unreasonable rules that you just can't abide by, talk to your professor immediately. (And I'm not talking about the fact that they want you back in the house before 3 am.) Even if it's nothing big, profe is always there to help and get you through it. Remember, you are paying for this semester and if your family is making it miserable for you, switches can be made.

Your family will probably expect you to return to the house for meals every day, especially lunch which is the biggest and longest meal of the day. Don't take that opportunity for granted! It is the perfect time to get to know them and just ask them random questions. Also, you'll have different interviews of questions to ask them for class, so that's a great time to start a discussion about your faith, etc. And if you're not planning on returning for lunch that afternoon, make sure to let them know! Even if you do have plans, it's not a common meal to skip. Besides, the cooking is delicious!

Your family also tends to expect you to leave during the week to hang out in the city. I don't think mine ever understood that I actually got more than one hour's worth of homework. But I also wouldn't pass up opportunities to spend time on the weekends with them! In my family, the weekends were when they did things because during the week they had work and would come home and watch TV. Weekends are a great, relaxing time to hang around with them whatever their errands or plans may be. If you go out for a meal or afternoon with your family, be ready to spend possibly a lot of time sitting and chatting with family friends! My family goes to a restaurant every Sunday, and I know that we will be there for hours. Their concept of time is not the same! So make sure to ask them when they will be returning to know when you need to plan time for homework, etc.

One thing I didn't know when I first came was how I could help my host mom around the house. She was always doing things, but never really asked me to do anything. I would just watch and see which things added on to more to do in her day, and which things took longer. For example, if she wasn't washing the dishes, I took the time to wash mine. If she was washing the dishes, I would clean the table. Also, if I didn't make my bed or straighten up my room, she would do it. This all varies family to family. Other students in my group were expected to do more on a regular basis. Chores are a good way to take some responsibility in the house and feel more at home and part of the family, rather than just a guest.

The last thing I would say about your family is that they are one of the best ways to learn and practice your Spanish, and also your biggest inlet to the Peruvian culture. Don't only go off with the Calvin group. Do things with your family! I spent my free week on a 4-day trip with them, and it was a blast! I laughed so much, and it was such a wonderful opportunity to get to know them on a deeper level! I also overheard my host mom and dad talking about the wedding of a friend from mass. I casually asked if I could go, and they seemed surprised that I would want to go with them, but said yes! It ended up being an incredible night, and I got to know their friend group so much better. Sometimes you just have to ask because they don't expect you to want to spend time with them. But it is so worth it; don't pass up those opportunities if you can help it. They really do care about you a ton!

Integrating into your Peruvian Host Family

Leesha Gunnink

Hola, future Peru students! I am so happy you've all decided to study in Arequipa, because it's honestly been an amazing experience. However, that's not what I'm supposed to be taking about! I am going to do my best to give you all advice on how to integrate yourself into your Peruvian host family. Many of these things may seem simple, but for me they have made all the difference. Any daily activity can turn into an adventure—don't forget you're in a foreign country!

I would say one of the most important things you can do is talk and joke around. Not only does it help your Spanish, but it shows you want to be part of the conversations and part of the family. At least from what I've learned, this especially applies at meals when more of the family is home. It's simple: just talk about the basics: about your day, their job, etc. They want to help you, so don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand all the time. Joking is another great way to connect with your family. Also, share your experiences. You're going to have frustrations throughout your day, and it's good to share that with your family to show that you're human! That way they can sympathize with you. I would advise that you try not to leave meals early because you might miss out on an opportunity to learn from or connect with your family on a deeper level. Also, ask for advice! There are going to be parts of the Peruvian culture that you may not understand, so ask your family about it. On that note, ask for help. I've found that it's a great way to not only learn, but also interact with your family. For example, I have asked my *mamá* about where to buy certain things, and many times she has gone with me (to find gifts, flowers, frames, medication, immunizations, just about everything). She has gone with me throughout the whole city searching for something too many times to count. It's been so fun because she knows the city so well, and she has her favorite stores. Some of the smallest errands have turned into adventures. That said, the more you can do with your family, the better!

Also, take them up on any offer to go somewhere, but also ask if you can accompany them in parts of their normal day: on their errands, shopping, picking up the kids, etc. It's a way to be part of the family because you'll be participating in their everyday life. Offer to help with everyday duties like cleaning, cooking, etc. I've heard from other students that it's been a good experience just to help wash the dishes. Also, it's super good to interact with any kids in your house. Ask to take them out on a short errand with you in the neighborhood. Offer to watch a movie with them, play with them in your free time, joke with them, take them out to ice cream, whatever you can think of! It will definitely make your experience all that more beautiful and help you become part of the family.

On your semester abroad, you are not only learning the Peruvian culture, but you are also sharing your culture with your Peruvian family and friends. One of the huge things that has made my semester so great has been bonding with my *mamá*. I'll admit it wasn't very hard. We both love sweets and baking, so we often bake cookies, brownies, muffins, pancakes, bars, etc. Those are all things that are different in the U.S., so it's been fun to show them what our food is like. Find a passion of yours that you can share. Teach them something tangible about your culture, instead of just talking about it. A student from the year before me taught my Peruvian family Ultimate Frisbee and they still remember it! The joke in the house right now is that I'm trying to make everyone fat because I am always making sweets. Baking is something so simple, but my family enjoys it, and I have loved being able to bond with my *mamá* in that way. I never anticipated that such a small thing could bond us together, but it has. Find a common interest and build on it.

I am sure every family is different, but I think with any family, if you offer part of who you are, they will be thankful just for the effort. So there you are! It's not so hard. It's the everyday, simple things that make the difference in integrating yourself into the family; all you have to do is make the effort.

Professors and Classes in the UCSP

Bethany Fennema

One of the most interesting experiences in spending a semester abroad is seeing how the educational system functions in comparison to that of the States. In each aspect of schooling, there are definite differences—some are fun and quirky, and others can be frustrating, but with an open and positive attitude, these differences can be eye-opening experiences to how the culture functions on an everyday basis.

Professors:

When working with Peruvian professors, communication is key. It is important to remember that the prof doesn't come from the same culture as you, so of course there are bound to be little things that seem strange, confusing, or even a bit annoying. They have different educational and teaching backgrounds than the profs we're accustomed to in the States, and therefore do things differently. This isn't always a bad thing, but it's for sure something to get used to. However, if the prof is doing something offensive, it's important to communicate with him/her to resolve the problem. For example, we had one prof who repeatedly came late to class, and who talked on the phone (a lot) during the remaining class time. Many of us felt like the prof was being extremely rude, but the prof didn't realize that, for us, this was something that would NEVER happen at Calvin; however, rather than discuss the issue with the prof, we spoke (rather heatedly) with Profe Bierling. Looking back, we probably should have honestly and kindly told the prof that we were a tad offended, and tried to come to an agreement as to how class could be different (although it is SUPER important to keep the Calvin prof truthfully updated on how classes and such are going... It's a balancing act for sure!)

Also, it's important to remember that, while working with a prof from another culture may be frustrating for you, it's probably equally as frustrating, if not more, for the prof! Entering into a classroom of studious gringos who struggle with Spanish would be quite intimidating, and cultural differences only magnify the sometimes dysfunctional feelings! All in all, though, profs at UCSP are great. They really truly do want the best for their students and are super willing to explain and clarify things as many times as it takes.

Class Conduct:

Classes at UCSP have a little bit of a different feeling than those at Calvin. One obvious difference is the emphasis placed on attendance and punctuality. The prof will take roll call every class period, and if you come any later than roll call, s/he may choose not to permit you to enter. Also, attendance plays into the final grade, so it's very important to always attend. Another different thing is the prof-student dynamic in class. Obviously every prof has a different style, but generally, class is very lecture-based. At UCSP, there is a high level of respect for profs, which is most clearly demonstrated when the prof first enters the classroom. When the prof arrives, all the students stand up next to their seats until s/he tells them to sit back down. This took many of us by surprise the first few weeks of classes, but it soon became normal routine. Also, in general, class seems to be less organized than in the States, but again, this quickly becomes the "new norm" after a few weeks.

Homework:

Homework, again, is done a bit differently than what we're accustomed to (like everything, right?). Rather than announcing the homework or reading that is due for the next class, the prof just expects that you're following the syllabus and doing the required reading. We found it easiest to ask the prof right before the end of class to double check what was due, because sometimes s/he would change the assignment.

Classes at la San Pablo

Lauren Muñoz

After three months of classes (both direct enrollment and Calvin classes), I have been able to pick up on some subtle and not so subtle differences in the way classes here are conducted, as well as collect some advice for future Calvin exchange students.

First of all, let's talk about the grading system. They give out all grades as 1-20, and an 11 is the lowest passing number. In addition to this, I've noticed that there's less grade inflation here. It is usually impossible for students to achieve a 20, and anywhere from 14 to 16 is a great grade. So really, don't worry about not receiving 18s and 20s on your assignments or quizzes. Your pride might take a blow after a few 12s or 13s on your quizzes, but 11 meets Calvin's requirements in all direct enrollment courses. Furthermore, Calvin classes, such as 308/309 will have Peruvian professors who will implement this system as well. Just be prepared for the lack of grade inflation.

Speaking of the Peruvian professors, the culture of the classroom is bit different, despite the fact that San Pablo tries to model itself as more like the universities in the U.S. Though Peruvian culture in general is often more laid back, the classes usually begin on time, and you have about five minutes after the start of class to enter during roll call. After this, the door is often shut and professors may or may not decide to allow tardy students to enter. Additionally, although there are students who use their laptops in class, it's not nearly as common in Peru as it is at Calvin. It is generally not respectful to use phones during lectures, but you may see others around you are using theirs, just like in class at Calvin.

The class culture here is also a bit more formal. Students stand when a professor enters the room until he or she signals you to sit down again. There also is minimal talking during lectures. Similarly, students tend to address the professors with their title every time and use the formal *usted* with its verb forms.

It's also very useful to make friends in your San Pablo classes. They can clarify questions about homework and how to make *fotocopias* (it's a bit difficult the first few times). People might approach you to ask where you're from, but usually it's important to start conversations with those around you. It's not fun to feel lost in a class without having someone to help you with any (inevitable) confusion. Sometimes professors will give the readings to the *Fotocopiadora* in the university. From there, you will enter, find your class code, and pay for a copy. This will sometimes take some time, so be prepared to spend twenty minutes hanging out, or come back to pick it up the next day. If you need copies made, this is also the place to do that. If you only need to print, there's a store across the street from the university with computers and printers. You can bring a flash drive there to print off your work for 30-50 céntimos, depending on the length. A flash drive is essential. Do not forget to bring one or buy one here.

My last point is about the importance of "presentation" in your work. Professors require neat presentation in all manners: neat writing, neat-looking paper, a cover page (*carátula*) for papers that fits San Pablo's requirements, mistakes corrected with whiteout instead of crossing them out, and sometimes submitted in a manila folder. If you're making a visual aid, video, acting, or anything else, make sure to do it well. I had a group project in my history class this past month, and we spent two days painting backgrounds and buying costumes for a skit, and we only practiced the content once, right before the class. While the skit was not well performed, the backgrounds and costumes were perfect, so we received an 18. It is that important to make sure things look good in your assignment, whatever it may be.

Los talleres

Michael Jadrich

During your semester in Arequipa, you will have the opportunity to participate in one of the *talleres*, or “workshops” offered by the Universidad Católica San Pablo. There are many options available. Some examples of the classes from this past year include sports such as soccer, basketball, and volleyball; other physical activities such as folk dancing, karate and tae kwon do; music groups like guitar, *tuna* (a traditional Peruvian genre), and choir; and clubs such as journalism, writing, chess, photography, community volunteering, and audiovisual production. These workshops are a great opportunity to integrate into the community and to meet Peruvian students. They can also be a great way to learn about the local culture or simply relax from regular classes, but there are a number of details that you should consider before choosing one of the options.

The majority of the workshops are on Saturdays. This makes it easy to schedule with your other classes but can also create some problems. Some of the *talleres* are fairly early in the morning and are in a location other than the main campus where you will have your other classes. If you enjoy late Friday nights – a night in a Peruvian *discoteca* can easily last *until the early hours* of the morning – you probably do not want to choose one of these. Speaking from my personal experience, my workshop started at 10:00 in the morning. This did not seem too difficult to make until I realized that it is in the other campus, which is about an hour trip from my house. Many weeks, after a typical Friday night, trying to arrive on time felt more like a chore or a regular weekday class than a fun activity.

Another difficulty arises from the fact that as a part of the Calvin program, you will leave on a number of trips during the weekends and will have to miss your Saturday *taller*. You will not receive a grade for the workshop so that is not a problem, but if it is a class that builds on itself, this can become difficult. A number of students this past year decided to take the folk dancing class. They enjoyed the first couple of weeks, but then we traveled for a weekend and when they returned they felt completely lost. After a couple more weeks missed for trips or other events they had no clue what was happening and decided that it was not worth attending. There are also some workshops that only happen every other week, and some students in these classes have only been able to attend a couple of times during the whole semester.

There are other workshops for which lack of attendance is not much of an issue. I decided to take the volleyball class with a number of other Calvin students, and it has worked out fantastically. It is a laid-back class and a lot of fun. The environment also makes it easy to meet the Peruvian students and to make new friends. Most importantly, when we miss classes for group trips we return and do not feel confused or left behind. In fact, I did not go for over a month because of a knee problem, and when I returned the professor did not even seem to notice or care that I had not been there.

Basically, the *talleres* offered in the San Pablo can be a lot of fun and are a great way to meet some of the students. If one sounds interesting or fun to you, go for it, and you will be able to deal with potential problems as they come. If it is important to you to not miss classes, there are some options during the week, but if you choose a Saturday workshop, understand that you will be absent often. This makes it hard to keep up in some situations, but in others it is not a problem. With this in mind, choose whatever you think you will most be able to enjoy, and use it as a way to integrate deeper into the community and culture in Arequipa.

How to Integrate Yourself into the University

Hannah Damsteegt

I know that all of you have many questions of what to expect for your upcoming semester abroad in Peru. So, allow me to explain how you guys can integrate yourself into the university and why it is important. I chose to write about this particular topic because this was my favorite part of my experience in Peru—the university life.

One of my biggest fears I had before coming to Peru was the fact that I was leaving my network of friends in Michigan. The thought of leaving my friends and going to a new country where I knew nobody scared me. How was I going to make new friends? Was I even capable of making new friends? Would the other Calvin students get along with me? Would I get along with the Peruvian students? Let me tell you that the answer to all of those questions is YES! I thought I would have a hard time making friends in Peru. But I didn't, so I know you guys will make friends with the Peruvian students as well.

But, how does one do this? I suggest hanging out at the university after your classes and talking to the Peruvian students in your classes. You don't even have to stick with the Calvin group. In fact, I believe it is better that you don't always hang out with the Calvin group after classes. Many of my Peruvian friends have told me that they would have approached me earlier to try to talk to me, but they were afraid of the whole Calvin group! I encourage you guys to break away from the Calvin group sometimes. I do this by sitting outside on the benches every day after my classes. I could go straight home if I wanted to, but I didn't think it was wise. You will only improve your Spanish if you use it! I know you will practice and use your Spanish in the household, but I think it is healthy to practice your Spanish with young people our age. Conversation will flow well because we all have something in common—being a student in la San Pablo. Yes. It seems like a scary idea, but I think it is worth it. So, why is it worth it?

First, your Spanish will improve dramatically if you practice it with close Peruvian friends. Your conversations will be engaging and interesting. Thus, the need and the desire to build a bigger Spanish vocabulary will be met while talking with your Peruvian friends.

If you are in the Spanish Education program, I suggest talking with your Peruvian friends for a couple of hours each day. It may sound like a long period of time, but I promise you that the time goes by fast! Why do I suggest this? If you want to pass the OPI exam, you need to practice your Spanish. In order to become certified to teach Spanish, you MUST pass the OPI exam. Practicing your Spanish with your friends is literally the key for your future!

Second, by meeting new friends at the university, you will have a life outside of the university. In other words, you can integrate yourself outside of the university if you integrate yourself into the university. Your friends in the university will invite you to hang out outside of the university. Perhaps, they will invite you to eat lunch in the *centro* before your next class. Perhaps, they will invite you to go out on a Friday evening. Whatever it might be, I guarantee you that it will be fun.

I feared that I would not have much of a life when I came here to Peru because all of my friends were in the States. I thought that I would be too scared to try to talk to the other students here. I thought that I would be alone. But, I got over my fear and simply tried to talk to the other students in my classes and to the students in the outside after my classes. As a result, I have had many opportunities to hang out with my friends outside of school, and I know for a fact that my Spanish has improved. These were two goals that I wanted to accomplish, and I have done that. For that, I am truly grateful. I know you guys can do it too. Good luck, and have a great semester in Peru!

Conversation Partners

Jamie Cheeney

Conversation partners are a great way to get to know a new friend and practice your Spanish very intentionally. There are students here at San Pablo studying English who are eager to practice. Some of them need to meet with a partner for class requirements while others just want to have a chance to practice with a native speaker. This year, we had a small get-together with all of the students to present about our universities and then we were assigned randomly to a partner. In my own personal experience, we hit it off right away. My conversation partner is also a business major, so we had plenty to talk about. She was one who chose by her own will to find a partner, so she was very eager and excited to meet. Our first time meeting up we planned on meeting the standard requirement of half an hour in Spanish than half an hour in English. That's how it started, but then we spent another two hours going back and forth between the two! We chat about girly things like the new relationship she's in or more challenging topics like faith or what we hope to do after graduation. It's really nice to just be able to have conversation about anything.

It's also great to have a comfortable place to critique one another's speech. Both of us are learning so we understand that corrections are necessary and helpful. It's a beautiful way to practice patience and grace with one another. We also like talk about nuances of language or phrases that we use in everyday speech that you wouldn't learn in a textbook or might not understand without an explanation. It's a great chance to dig a little deeper than you might normally would with just trying to get your thoughts out. You can take a few minutes to figure out what the best way to say something really is rather than just getting by if you choose to work through those challenges together.

But the relationship is also about more than just conversation. It's also a great opportunity to learn more about daily lives of people your age through both questions and what you actually do together. I like to let my partner choose where we go. I told her that I want to see the places in Arequipa where she likes to spend time rather than just the ones I know how to find with my Calvin friends. We've been to coffee shops, cafes, and malls in areas I may not have visited otherwise. Sometimes it takes some effort to find the place, but it's worth it just to try something new. We have also done things like horseback riding, and she will be joining us this weekend to go whitewater rafting!

I should note that not everyone has had such great experiences the first time around. Some students are not that interested in meeting, but if you are and your partner is not, talk to the profe and she can help you find someone who will be dedicated to trying to make something work. Sometimes it's hard to find a time to meet but I have never regretted any time I set aside for these meetings. I wish we could get together more! I would strongly encourage you to make this something that you try this semester. And remember the cliché that you will find to be so true this entire semester: you'll get out of it what you put into it. ¡Bendiciones!

Printing at the University

Laurel Ackerman

To find your syllabus, I suggest you go to the library in the “*planta baja*.” You can ask the desk if they would print out your syllabus for you. It was a new service they offered this year, so I hope they continue it for you all. If they cannot print it out, make sure you ask if it is just because your schedule is not ready or if it is because they are not offering the service. (TIP – if you are having difficulty understanding them, feel free to ask them to speak more slowly or “*más despacio*.”)

If they are not offering the service, you can go to the UCSP portal. The link for that is <http://academico.ucsp.edu.pe/login.aspx> and Profe should give you your username and password to log on. Once you are there, click “*Alumno*” (top left). A list will appear on the left hand side. One of the options is “*Proceso de Matrículas*” and has a sub-option “*Constancia de Matrícula*.” When you click on the sub-option, your schedule will come up. Next to your list of classes, there is a space that says “*Sílabo*” and links that say “*Descargar*” to download.

There are two *fotocopiadoras*: on the first floor and the second. I generally go to the first floor since that is where most of the Calvin students go and the Peruvian students pass by. I am only going to explain how the first floor works, but the one on the second floor works very similarly (with the exception of having internet).

I would suggest you either have your document on a flash drive or in an email to yourself. Either way, enter the *fotocopiadora*, go to one of the computers along the back wall at standing height and open the document. (TIP – if you’re using your e-mail, for @, or *arroba* in Spanish, hit “ALT-6-4”.)

Do you want something in color or just black and white? For color, save it to Disc Z or “*Disco Zeta*”; for black and white, *disco zeta* also works or you can print it to one of the printers. Ask for help from a Peruvian around you if you need it. (TIP – printer is *impresora* in Spanish.)

You are now ready to pick up your doc – generally the harder part because depending on when you go, it could be quite busy and there aren’t really lines; just a mass of people. Go with plenty of time to spare and don’t be afraid to be a little more forceful with your presence. Do not cut, be nice, and certainly still be polite with the workers. However, feel free to put your hand across the counter, ask for attention, and even push back if someone tries to take your spot. It will be okay.

Go to the counter and if after about thirty seconds, one of the workers has not come up to help you, feel free to try to gain their attention with a “*disculpe*” or a “*perdón*.” Tell them whether you sent the doc to a printer or saved it to *disco Z*. If you are waiting by the nearest counter, they generally get the idea that you have printed something and will pull out the papers for you. Feel free to tell them the title and how many pages there are in the doc and specify if you want it in color. Then they’ll tell you how much money you owe and you pay them.

Online you can find the “*Formato Trabajo*” which has all the requirements for your UCSP papers, including the title page (*carátula*), size, font, margins, style, and citations. (Type “formato para trabajos” in the search bar at www.ucsp.edu.pe.) If you are unsure about the format for a certain assignment or paper, ask the professor. They often require these things.

That is all, friends. Don’t let the little things bother you. It is all part of the process of learning to live in another culture. And don’t be shy about asking for help – it’ll make things a lot easier in the long run. Good luck!

Things to Do in Arequipa

Emily Harrell

Before I begin to tell you of the wonders in Arequipa, I want to begin with a bit of a disclaimer: part of the adventure and the joy is simply in personal exploration of the city. I also want to encourage you to never stop exploring. There comes a time around the middle of the semester in which most students have developed a regular pattern of the places they tend to visit, but Arequipa extends farther than one might think.

Something that I wish I had done is visit each district of Arequipa at least once. Each has its own distinct personality and beauty. Some of you may be living in Yanahuara, but if you don't, visiting Yanahuara is a must. The *arequipeños* preserved the old appearance of the district with its cobbled streets, buildings of white volcanic stone, and the vibrant crimson flowers lining the walls. Another district I recommend is Sachaca, which includes one of the city's most beautiful "miradores." Sachaca displays more of the countryside of Arequipa, which is not something you want to miss.

Restaurants: As far as central Arequipa is concerned, the general rule is that the closer to the center you journey, the more expensive the shops and restaurants will run. Although some of the smaller businesses may appear to be less than desirable, they actually tend to provide delicious meals for less. I recommend that you try many different kinds of restaurants, but avoid the extremely U.S. chains like McDonald's or Burger King. If you are craving something closer to home, you can find a delectable pizza place on Calle Jerusalén, or try Tallerino, an inexpensive pasta restaurant on Calle San Francisco. Both have a touch of familiarity, but also a Peruvian flair.

Cafes: The cafes in Arequipa are delectable. Say farewell to Starbucks and encounter the delicacies of Arequipa. As in the States though, the cafes provide perfect locations to study, chat, or hold Bible study. In Calle Mercaderes, Capriccio offers a variety of scrumptious cakes, coffees, and desserts perfect to suit even the deepest sweet lovers, Pura Fruta is for days when frozen yogurt and fruit smoothies call your name, and Lucciano provides yummy pastries and cakes for days when your wallet is a bit thin. As a cafe lover myself, I have encountered many other cafes on the streets surrounding the center. Although they are unfortunately a bit pricier, in one of them I tasted the best mocha I have ever discovered in my life (worth it!). Another cafe I simply must mention by name is Cusco Coffee. Though the coffee is not the cheapest, the cookies are three soles and the warm apple cider perfectly fulfills a temporary heartache for Michigan autumn.

Sports: Sports, especially *fútbol*, are an excellent bonding activity with the other *peruanos*. Many fields exist around the city, but both the Club Internacional and Magnopata are also good places to meet. Magnopata has concrete fields, but you'll be surprised by how quickly you become accustomed to them. La cancha Salavery also holds many extracurricular activities, but traveling by foot is usually not an option because it is quite far, but you can take a combi to get there.

Two other honorable mentions are "el Mercado San Camillo" and "el Museo La Recoleta." Go to the market after you have gotten to know the city well and preferably with a Peruvian. The San Camillo is a wonderful covered market that sells mostly food, but also clothes, electronics, and other goods. "El Museo La Recoleta" is a beautiful Franciscan convent with incredible books and other delights for museum lovers; however, the hours are a tad strange, so be careful not to go when it is closed!

In short, you never know what glories you will find unless you explore. Also, you should know that *queso helado* does not actually contain cheese, and the faces on the *guagua* bread are not candies, but rather plaster. A few mistakes you won't want to make. ¡Disfruten la ciudad hermosa!

Here is a map of a few of the best places:

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF&msa=0&msid=208033581256531217899.0004ddda2b9ddd0f0590>

The Transportation System

Megan Rozeveld

The Arequipan transportation system can be intimidating at first, but is so simple. While my Dutch independent self at the beginning of the semester declared I was going to walk everywhere all the time to save money, this turned out not to be the case. Walking is quite nice and saves you money, but the transportation system is very convenient and saves time. At the beginning of every month, you will receive 100 *soles* to spend on transportation and water.

Many of you will use a *combi* to get to school or around the city in general. Some are like buses and others are like fifteen-passenger vans. Before attempting the combi system, ask your host family which combi you should take, as they know which ones run by your house and where they go. You should know the name of your house and school stop. Hailing a combi is super easy: stand on the side of the road and hold your hand out when you see yours coming. It's completely fine to stop one, find out it's not yours, and let them continue on. They will almost always stop unless they are completely full.

Try to get in the combi as fast as possible and hold on before the rig starts moving, or you are very likely to fall on your face or nail someone with your belongings as we have all done many times. Be sure to have your belongings close and protected. If there is a seat you should sit down. I have learned that in Peru it is completely acceptable to feel like you are half-sitting on them because 1) they don't care, and 2) those people can usually hold up the best conversations. Otherwise you are in for a slightly uncomfortable ride standing up since the combis are often short and packed. If you're standing and the person at the door says, "*Adelante,*" move further back in the combi to make room for more riders.

When it is nearing your stop, try to make your way towards the front of the combi and say, "*Baja* (insert your stop name here)" Or if you don't know your stop's name you can just say "*baja*". Be prepared to uncomfortably squeeze through from the back. You pay at the END as you exit or in the middle of the ride if the person at the door requests "*pasaje*." Every ride is 70 *céntimos* (with exact change) or 80 *céntimos* if you need change. It's better not to pay with anything greater than 5 *soles*.

Once you are comfortable with combis, they are a snap. One time I took the combi to the end of the line because I was curious, and at the end they make everyone get out so they can start over going back the other way. I went all the way to the district of Buenos Aires (not Argentina) and had to go all the way back to Cayma. But I got to see more of Arequipa for only 1.40 *soles*!

The taxi system is even simpler. All you have to do is call a taxi to wherever you are or hail one from the street. Use safe taxi services like "Taxitel" or "Turismo Arequipa." Decide on the price with the driver before you get in the taxi. You CAN and often SHOULD try to talk the price of your taxi down. If you're not in a rush, don't be afraid to say no to a price and hail a different taxi. And always start with a "*¡Buenos(as) días/tardes/noches!*" to be polite.

For walking, always do the obvious things, like if it is dark don't take the back roads or walk alone. And the rule that we all cling to so dearly in the U.S. of always walking on the right side of the road does NOT apply in Peru. It's a free-for-all on those sidewalks. When crossing a street, just be smart and place another person between you and a car. It's simple, and you are all smart people (although I seemed to have forgotten when I came to Peru and had some close calls).

Just don't you worry. Transportation is easy, and if you get lost you can always call your family. Good luck!

Shopping

Lori Dykstra

While living in Peru for four months, you will become very accustomed spending little. You will learn to challenge yourself to find a deal, which is not always so difficult once you learn the ropes. Here I will tell you about some good strategies to buy groceries and other life necessities, find good places to eat and treat yourself, and know where to buy all the *artesanía* that your friends and family are expecting you to bring back. Keep in mind that this is mostly from my experience and other students in my group may have other ideas. Never be afraid to ask a Peruvian because most likely they know better where to go and how to find a deal.

- **Groceries/general life necessities:** There are quite a few grocery stores throughout the city, namely Plaza Veá, Metro, Tottus, Franco, El Super, and Wong. Right now it is obviously pointless to try to explain where they are located, so I suggest soon after arriving to ask a family member to take you to the closest *supermercado* or at least ask where it is. I personally frequent Plaza Veá quite a bit. It is very similar to a Meijer or Wal-Mart because it has everything from groceries to electronics, household goods, clothing, etc. There are also shopping malls around the city, like Real Plaza, Parque Lambramani, and Mall Aventura Plaza. NOTE: If you find yourself with a group of friends searching for something fun, cheap and delicious, go to the bakery section of Plaza Veá (or perhaps any supermarket) and buy a variety of wonderful fresh-baked, CHEAP bread to your heart's content.
- **Go out and treat yourself:** This is a delicious but dangerous topic. Going out seems cheap most of the time, and it probably is in comparison to what we're used to in the states, but it's important to pace yourself throughout the semester. Mercaderes is a pedestrian street in *el centro* right off the *Plaza de Armas* which has many golden finds to satisfy your sweet tooth, meet up with friends for a bite to eat, do homework, etc. Some favorites: Pura Fruta – frozen yogurt with fruit and toppings for 6 soles, great juices and smoothies, sandwiches, etc. Mamut – delicious sandwiches. Capriccio – cake, shakes, cake, sweets, cake. Near the plaza and need something small and sweet? Get a soft serve ice cream cone at McDonalds on Mercaderes or El Super (supermarket in the plaza opposite the cathedral) for very cheap. Note that many of these places have other locations in other parts of the city, especially Av. Ejército and Av. Cayma.
- **Artesanía:** Before embarking on this topic, I should advise you that it might be a good strategy to make a list of what and for whom you're buying souvenirs. And don't be afraid to spend money on yourself. But beware – I would buy an entire *artesanía* stand for myself if I could. If you want to buy things in Arequipa, I suggest going near the Plaza San Francisco en *el centro* which has lots of stores all together with better prices. However, I would say you should prepare to do a lot of this kind of shopping when you go to Cusco. It's a very touristy city with every type of Peruvian handicraft you could want and lots of beautiful street art for cheap. In *el barrio* San Blas there are many places where they are very eager to strike a deal. There is also a great *artesanía* market outside of downtown (Artesanía Llancaqumaki I think it's called) on Avenida Sol which will overwhelm you with options. You may also have the chance to check out the huge market in Pisac on the tour of the Sacred Valley. Wherever you buy souvenirs, you MUST barter. They always up the prices, and you should not feel bad for lowering them.

Final words: Sorry if this has been overwhelming because you have no idea what I'm talking about. A good rule of thumb to keep in mind is that for anything like food, school supplies, fruit, bread, and other necessities, buying from stores on the streets is typically much cheaper than a supermarket (but obviously lacks the convenience of having everything all together). Finally, the balance between spending and saving is tricky and different for everyone. You are a college student (and possibly Dutch – double whammy), but please don't be afraid to shower yourself with *regalitos*. You will learn as you go what the right balance is for you.

Sitios para estudio etnográfico y voluntariado

Hannah Blackwood

While in Arequipa, getting involved in some sort of volunteer work or observation is a meaningful way to spend your free time. If you are in the *Estudio Etnográfico* class, you will be required to do this, but even if you're not, these are great opportunities. No matter your major, it's not hard to find some place to volunteer that interests you. Here are brief descriptions from my classmates of some of the great things that they got involved with. And if none of these sounds right for you, I'm sure you'll be able to find something that does. *Buena suerte* and happy volunteering!

Biblioteca Regional Mario Vargas Llosa (Corner of Calle San Francisco and Melgar, Cercado)

- Activities: "Entering information in the catalog for new books, entering information for ID card applications, talking with employees, reading, etc."
- Highlights: Relationships with the employees. "It's a really tight and friendly community."
- Recommended? "Yeah probably... At times it's slow, but it's been a good experience overall."

Hogar San Vicente de Paul – Casa de Abuelitas (Calle Santa Rosa between Goyeneche and Herrera)

- Activities: "Listen, hold hands, help with the food prep, help feed the *abuelitas*, dance, read the Bible for them, sit with them - super chill."
- Highlights: "I taught one of the *abuelas* how to swing dance!"
- Recommended? "Yes! I loved it. The workers are wonderful, the *abuelitas* are so loving. If you want to feel loved and appreciated beyond a doubt, go there. However, students should know that it does take a lot of patience and it is sometimes really emotionally draining because they are very lonely and some are blind, only speak Quechua, don't have teeth, can't walk... etc."

Clínica San Juan de Dios (Avenida Ejército, across from Real Plaza)

- Activities: *Pediatrics (2nd floor)*: "I follow the doctors on their rounds of short-term patients every Wednesday morning. Afterwards, I can interact with the kids that are there long-term (play games, talk, teach some English, and just hang out)." *Physical therapy clinic*: "Observe/talk with therapists."
- Highlights: "I LOVE being with the kids. I feel like I really am a bright part of their lives, which are pretty hard considering some of them live there for years. One of our favorite activities is playing Uno." "Interacting with the residents or interns. One moment in particular was seeing a spinal tap, another was helping find and translate info regarding the side effects of a drug (which led to taking the patient off the drug), and another one was seeing and hearing the story of a boy with a mass that was caused from the food he eats in his home within a *pueblo joven*."
- Recommended? "Yes. The pediatrics floor is a great place to connect with kids. If you're interested in therapy, it's a really good way to get a feel for therapy with kids." "The people are very friendly and open. It has been a great place to learn about the culture, and also medicine."

Incalpaca (Calle Condor)

- Activities: "Observe each department of the company, ask questions, take tours of the factory, etc."
- Highlights: "The tour of the factory when we saw the process of how they make the clothes from the raw material to a *chompa*. It was fascinating!" "It is fun talking with the people about their experiences. Fun to go shopping with discounts!"
- Recommended? "Yes, especially for those who are interested in business or international business." "Yes, because it is very organized...better than other companies."

Autodema (Cayma)

- Activities: "I help the HR department with paperwork, filing, and data entry."
- Highlights: "I like to get to know the people I work with. I ask questions about how things work here and how business is different; they're so helpful and patient in explaining anything I want to know."
- Recommended? "Yes, for students looking for something in Business. It's a cross of a government agency and private business so you can learn about both. I would definitely suggest having plenty of questions though because the type of work that you do in just a few hours a week isn't something you learn much from, but the questions you can ask in that time is where you will grow the most."

Colegio Nacional Arequipa (Calle Lucas Poblete)

- Activities: "I observe the three English classes every Wednesday. If the teacher needs my help on an English grammar concept, I am there to help. I walk around the classroom available to help students. My 'help' consists of aiding in translating a sentence from English to Spanish and vice versa."
- Highlights: "I really love it when the girls share conversation with me. I love asking them questions about their family, and I love it when they ask me questions. It puts me at the same level as them."
- Recommended? "Yes. This is a good site to see the differences in the education system in the United States vs. Peru. However, since this is an all-girls school, only female students should go."

Escuela Ecológica Urbana or Escuela San Lazaro

- Activities: "I work with a teacher and a student teacher in two English classes for 4th and 6th grade girls. I help come up with practice examples for the grammar concepts, demonstrate pronunciation, help students individually with homework, and occasionally grade assignments or tests."
- Highlights: "I have a lot of opportunities to talk with the teachers, and they love to talk about our families and experiences. I've even had one of the teachers take me out to lunch to practice English/Spanish together. I love being able to work with the students and get to know their interests and personalities. They get very excited to see me whenever I come in, and it's adorable to hear 'Good morning, Miss Lauren' when I enter the room. They even stand until I dismiss them to sit."
- Recommended? "Yes, especially for students who want experience with a classroom in another culture. I'm not an education major, but I think it would be a good fit for anyone who was interested in hands on experience in teaching."

Unámonos – Special Education School (Calle Santa Marta, Cercado)

- Activities: "I'm in the first grade class. I help out the teachers with various tasks or to keep order but mostly do one-on-one with the kids when they do activities."
- Highlights: "I love when I get there and the kids are so excited to see 'Tía Lori,' as they call me. Some of them run and give me big, long hugs. It's been fun becoming buddies with some of them, but at times it is definitely a test of patience."
- Recommended? "Yes, especially for those thinking education or special ed. I am neither of those, but I still enjoy it. It is interesting to see their methods of teaching and I'm happy to see that these kids have a good environment where they can learn and be equipped to work when they graduate. At times I feel like a distraction, but I remind myself that I am helping them out, learning something myself, and using my time for service."

Iglesia Bautista Fe

*Read about Jae's experience at this church in her entry "Faith and Church in Arequipa"

Cosas para hacer por la noche en Arequipa

Joe VanderWeide

What sorts of things are there to do in Arequipa during the nights and weekends? This question is something that I've asked multiple times during the semester and certainly many other people in our group have asked as well. Thankfully, there is no shortage of things to do. Practically every weekend I've spent in Arequipa has been an adventure in one way or another as well as something that I will look back on fondly. At the start of the semester, one of the things that we noticed rapidly was that a lot of people mostly enjoy going to the *discotecas*, of which there are myriads in the center of the city. This is a huge thing for a lot of the students (although I've heard stories of professors going to the *discotecas* also!) and during my time here I've definitely enjoyed the experience of going out for the night with a group of friends, which should always include Peruvians. Although going to the *discotecas* is an excellent experience and a great opportunity to witness a significant aspect of the culture, this generally wasn't on the top of my priority list or that of my friends given that there are practically hundreds of other things to do that don't involve the *discotecas*.

One of the things that my friends and I did, which we all enjoyed immensely after a long week and was essentially the brainchild of our experience here, was Tranquil Friday. Generally we had the event of Tranquil Friday on a given Friday but we've occasionally expanded it to include Tranquil Weekend or Tranquil Midweek. This event generally included sitting around in one of our houses, buying some local food (generally the bread which is incredible, although it could really be anything), or even making our own food, having a nice relaxing cup of tea (my favorite is *anís*, which is black licorice and a great digestive which I highly recommend, or *manzanilla*, which is great for relaxing), and watching a movie. For my friends and me this was a great time to spend together after a pretty busy week in the university and hear about all of the adventures that we had, which I'm sure you all will have plenty of.

Another thing that my friends and I enjoyed a couple of times was visiting with my Peruvian friends in their houses which generally included meeting their parents, since most of the university students live with their parents until they are married. If you have this opportunity, I would highly recommend it, because talking with my friends' parents and visiting their homes were great ways to learn more about the culture and to see what differences and similarities exist in the families here. It was a great experience for me and I hope that you all are able to develop these kinds of relationships with your Peruvian friends as well.

One final message that I would like to stress is that although the *discotecas* are great (I've definitely enjoyed them) there are a huge number of things to do in Arequipa: experiencing local cuisine, getting rid of homesickness by eating a pizza, visiting the cinema, going to the malls, walking around the center of the city, going to the *Plaza de armas* at night, going to the beach with your family, visiting friends, or just staying in for the night and relaxing. So don't limit yourselves by just going to the *discotecas* and not taking the opportunity to see what the city has to offer. Regardless, I'm excited for you guys—I know that you'll have a great time, and you all will be in the prayers of all of us here in Peru this semester. Paz.

La seguridad

Carmen Bilbao

While studying abroad, safety and security are a top priority. As much as we want to believe that everyone is trustworthy, that is just not the case – not in Peru, not anywhere. There will always be those kinds of people that are looking to rob you or even hurt you, and it's always better to be safe than sorry! While this is not meant to scare you, it is good to be reminded of ways to keep safe. The last thing you want to happen while you are on this amazing and fun adventure is lose something valuable or find yourself in harm's way. Here are a few recommendations to help you avoid any dangerous and unfortunate scenarios.

When packing for Peru, you may decide to bring along valuable things, such as a laptop or camera. That is perfectly fine, but how can we keep these possessions – as well as other things such as your passport and money – safe from theft? The best advice is to keep them locked away or at home when you don't need them, or keep them out of sight when you do. Some things are better left at home, such as your passport and visa. Keep these and other important documents locked up in your luggage. Other items that you may want to leave at home include laptops and excess money (it's best not to carry too much with you in your wallet). These should be fine in your room, but if you have a cleaning lady or someone outside of the family in the house, you should ask your host parents if it's safe to leave them out. There are other things that you may want to bring along with you, such as your money, cellphone, camera, etc. Keep these items in a bag, preferably a cross-body bag with zippers. If you choose to use a backpack, it's best to keep it in front of you and in your sight while walking the streets or riding public transportation. Avoid keeping things in your pockets, as this could also make you an easy target. Another important tip is that thieves tend to work in groups of two or more, with one distracting you as the other goes for your valuables, so stay alert!

Even more important than keeping your possessions safe is keeping yourself safe. The best thing to do is use your common sense and follow your instincts. If something seems risky, don't do it! Walk around in groups, especially at night. You will also most likely be using public transportation relatively frequently. Combis are cheaper and possibly safer, since there are usually several people riding along with you, but you should avoid taking really full combis at night as it is harder to keep an eye on your things when you're crowded. Taxis are also safe, but it is better to share one with a friend. Turismo Arequipa and Taxitel are a few taxi companies that are known to be trustworthy and safe. You should always look for these companies. Calling the companies to request a taxi is better, but if this is not possible you should ask to see the taxi driver's registration to make sure they are registered and safe. It is also a good idea to have a friend or family member watch you enter the taxi and make it clear to the driver that you will be calling someone once you arrive at your destination. You may also want to consider keeping a personal alarm and/or pepper spray with you whenever you are out of the house. It will come in handy if anything does happen, and it makes you feel a lot safer as well! Above all, just be aware of your surroundings and make sure someone knows where you are at all times.

Although these precautions seem simple and easy to follow, you may find yourself feeling more and more comfortable and less careful as the semester goes on. Don't let this happen! Though you may know a bit more, you are still vulnerable, and you should never let your guard down. From the moment you arrive in Peru up until you are on the plane back home, remember to stay alert and follow your instincts.

Retrieving a Package from Customs

Lori Dykstra

Mail is addressed to the university, but it could take as long as a couple weeks for letters to arrive. Occasionally, packages were also delivered to the university, but don't count on it. There is always a chance that a package is kept for customs, in which case you will have to go get it from SERPOST downtown. Just to forewarn you, it is quite a hassle to get a package from customs, but hopefully the contents are worth it. If you can, find out from the sender ahead of time what is inside the package, so you will know its contents when you open it with the customs official. It doesn't hurt to ask or research ahead of time about prohibited customs items - it is a good idea to know if you are really allowed to have the items in the package. The process is as follows:

1. A slip of paper will arrive for you at the university, to notify that you have a package in customs. You will retrieve this paper from Ursula (or whoever is working in the university's international relations office at the time).
2. SERPOST only has two times during each weekday to pick up a package from customs, and only serves a very limited number of people at each time. Figure out what those times are, or ask Ursula to call and ask. I suggest arriving at SERPOST at least 1 ½ hours early, as people start to line up early (even in the morning, before it opens).
3. What to bring to SERPOST: The form you received with information about your package at customs, address of host family (the customs official I met was wary of accepting UCSP's address - though make sure you clear this with your host family first!), 2 copies of your passport, 2 copies of your visa, your original passport and visa (some officials like to see the originals), and your UCSP ID card (this isn't necessary but it adds credibility). It is also a good idea to bring a pen and some money, along with your cellphone in case things go longer than expected. Consider bringing a book or some homework to pass the time.
4. Once in line, pay attention to others around. Lines in Peru do not function like lines in the U.S., so be sure your spot isn't taken. While waiting, you will be expected to fill out a form with all the information about your claim - this is located on the counter (I would ask friendly people in line if unsure where to locate this and what to fill out). When the post office employee appears to hand out numbers (yes, the wait so far was only to get a number in line), there is a mad dash to the counter - don't be afraid to run in there too and insist on your proper place in line!
5. Once you've handed in your slip and received your number, there is more waiting until your number is called. Your spot is then guaranteed, so I'd say that if your number is above 10, you may have time to walk around the *centro* for 20 minutes or a ½ hour, but don't come back late as your spot will not be saved if you're not there when they call your number.
6. When your number is called, you will go into a small office where one or two customs officials are waiting with the package. Be respectful to these officials and to the laws they are trying to abide by (however frustrating they might be). The official will ask to see documentation and then ask several questions. They will expect you to know something of the size and contents of the package. (So again, prior information about the contents is very helpful!) Then, you will be asked to open the package. The official will itemize everything in the package. You'll most likely not be taxed on any of the items (or at least you shouldn't be), but I would bring at least 50 *soles* along in case.
7. Finally, you will be allowed to take your package and leave!

Be assertive and confident and ask for help from friendly people in line. I was blessed to have a good Peruvian friend join me, and that was very helpful and made the time pass more quickly. Stay patient as the entire process could take several hours.

Viaje independiente a Paracas, Ica y Nazca

Anna Drechsel

These were popular destinations among Calvin students this semester for our *semana libre*. Here I'll take you through our trip a bit to give you an idea of what to expect. I recommend going to a tourist agency in Arequipa. They have plenty of good info and recommendations. Next you'll want to buy your bus tickets. My group took Cruz del Sur. Though pricier than some of the other lines, it's known to be the safest. It's also really comfy and includes a meal. We made hostel reservations for the first couple nights so we knew we had somewhere to go, but left the other nights open for more flexibility. One thing to note about reservations is that sometimes it says "full" online when they really aren't. If you can, find a number and call.

We went to Paracas first, a small touristy town on the coast of Peru, about 12 hours by bus from Arequipa. An attraction here is Las Islas Ballestas, which many refer to as "Poor Man's Galapagos" with all of its sea lions, penguins, and if you're lucky, dolphins. The Paracas National Reserve is another attraction – a beautiful section of desert that leads right up to the Pacific Ocean.

My group had an incredible time at a Hostel called Kokopelli in Paracas. It's Paracas' only hostel located right on the beach. I believe we each paid \$9 a night. We became good friends with the people that work there as well as fellow backpackers. Some of the highlights: free kayaks, hammocks, bar in the hostel, a sweet little restaurant that serves AMAZING burgers, free breakfast, and hot showers! We loved this little hostel so much that we decided to stay 3 nights instead of 2 – our original plan. The others stayed at the Paracas Backpackers House and also loved it.

We didn't make any reservations beforehand for tours in Paracas. I would recommend talking with the people at your hostel before deciding which agency/group you're going to go with. Be wary of signing up with anyone who offers you a "really great deal." They'll definitely be pushy and very friendly. If I remember right, a good cost for both a boat tour of the islands and a bus tour of the reserve is 40-45 soles. Another group of students took 4-wheelers to the Reserve, which sounded amazing. Dress warm and bring a hat with you on the boat tour – you never know when one of the thousands of birds might let loose right about your head.

From there we headed to Ica. You can get there by a direct shuttle or take a taxi to a half-way point and then a bus to Ica. Ica's main attraction is a desert lagoon called Huacachina, just 10 minutes outside the city. Here you can do sand sports, including sand-buggies and sand-boarding. I would once again recommend talking with the people at your hostel.

In Huacachina we stayed at the hostel Carola del Sur, where we signed up for a package deal to Nazca with this hostel owner. His brother owns a hostel in Nazca, and we paid a total of \$100 each for flying the Nazca lines, transportation, and hanging out at the hostel during the down time. This was definitely worth it. (We also had somewhere to leave our luggage during the flights.) We flew the lines in the morning and did an afternoon tour. We spent just one day in Nazca.

Other random tips from me and others: I would say the ideal group size would be about four, which is easier than a big group of gringos, as well as better for finding transportation, but bigger groups are definitely doable. Pack as light as possible – I just brought a backpack and purse. Cook your own meals (and buy some food beforehand in Arequipa, which is cheaper). Make friends in your hostel! And as always in Peru, allow for flexibility. Relax and enjoy your free week!

Independent Travel to the Jungle

Lindsey Ryskamp

Our group took the opportunity to postpone taking the midterm exams and travel around Peru for a week. Many students went up the coast to destinations including Paracas, Huacachina, and the Nazca Lines. Five of us headed to Puerto Maldonado in the Peruvian Amazon Jungle (followed by some time in Cusco), another great option. I believe we were the first Calvin group to arrange travel plans to the jungle, so I'm recording just what we did for future students who may want to follow our tracks.

First of all, as you will hear many times throughout the semester, Peru's three distinct regions are the jungle, the mountains, and the coast. There are many opportunities to explore the mountains, and Arequipa's close proximity to the Pacific Ocean and the time you spend in Lima will get you a taste of the coast. However, the nearest you will get to the jungle will be the night spent in the cloud forest of Aguas Calientes on the way to Machu Picchu. The Peruvian Amazon covers about 60% of the country—it would be a disappointment to miss this huge part of Peru!

Before you go, you should get vaccinated. Though we weren't asked to show documents proving we were vaccinated, vaccinations for yellow fever and pills for malaria are required by international health agencies. The U.S. Center for Disease Control recommends both for traveling in this area. Malaria pills, like the anti-bacterial doxycycline, can be purchased from most pharmacies in Arequipa. We took this pill two days before leaving for the jungle, throughout our trip, and 28 days following. Our malaria pills only cost about S/. 40. A yellow fever vaccination is the main necessity. If you haven't received it already, you can get it for free at the *Hospital Regional Honorio Delgado*. Not knowing about that ahead of time, we went to the nearby *Clinica Arequipa* where we paid S/.70, still less than in the U.S.

We reserved all of our travel plans online about two weeks before the trip, though doing so earlier is a good idea, of course. After much research on various jungle lodges, we settled on an inexpensive option: a 4 day/ 3 night stay at Eco-Aventuras Amazónicas (which meant a few days following our stay to explore Cusco or do something else). To get there, we booked an overnight bus ride with *Cruz del Sur* from Arequipa to Cusco. From the bus station we taxied to the airport to fly to Puerto Maldonado with Star Peru, the most economical airline we could find (some look cheaper at first glance, but those are Peruvian citizen rates). To arrange the dates of our visit, prices, and transportation, we emailed the lodge and communicated with the manager/tour guide, Lucho. He speaks Spanish as well as English and is a pleasure to get to know. We arrived as tourists and left as friends!

This was a rustic lodge setting tucked back in the jungle away from the city. Here they served us three meals a day, included in our package, and provided us with private bungalows for lodging. The accommodations were definitely basic: there was no electricity and the humidity made everything a bit damp, but we enjoyed this aspect of the experience. It was a part of the adventure and kind of like camping. Plus this lodge was inexpensive and the people who worked there were fantastic!

In general, the day-to-day schedule at this lodge depends a lot on the weather and on what your group wants to do. There was plenty of down time to just relax in a hammock and take in the jungle scenery, but we also participated in a variety of activities including a high ropes course, canopy bridge and zip line, swimming in the Madre de Dios River, visiting the house of a typical Amazonian family, bird watching at a clay lick, and various night walks. My favorite day was the excursion we took out on the river to the Tambopata National Reserve and Lake Sandoval, which was also included in our package. It was absolutely beautiful and we were able to see lots of wildlife.

Our cost, including vaccinations, flights, lodging etc., totaled to under \$500 per person. Some suggestions on what to bring: flashlight, lightweight pants (avoid jeans), lightweight t-shirts and long-sleeved shirts, insect repellent (try for high DEET), extra batteries for your camera (or just conserve the battery in case your lodge has no electricity), hat and sunglasses, possibly a roll of toilet paper...

I would highly recommend this trip!

Volcán Misti

Micah Warners

Waking up your first morning in Arequipa, one of the first things you notice are the volcanoes surrounding the city. The view is incredible. Three volcanoes surround the city: Chachani, Picchu Picchu, and Misti. Misti has the most perfectly-shaped cone of the three, with a picturesque triangular shape and many times a snow-covered peak. It is a symbol of Arequipa.

One of the first questions I asked my host parents was if it was possible to climb Misti. They told me it was possible, yet very hard. Some students from Calvin had tried it in the past, and many from our group did the same this year. 11 students from our group attempted and completed the climb in mid-November, along with Profesora Bierling's awesome husband Neal. It was a very interesting experience.

It was an awesome time, but incredibly difficult as well. It is a two-day hike, so we did it from a Saturday to a Sunday using a tour agency named Quechua Tours (on Calle Jerusalén downtown Arequipa). We decided to climb up the backside of Volcán Misti, the easier way up. After a drive to the trailhead at 14,000 feet (Arequipa is at about 7,700 feet), we hiked three hours to our base camp at 16,000 feet. We spent the night there before getting up very early and leaving our tents and sleeping bags to attempt to reach the summit of Volcán Misti at over 19,000 ft.

Summiting Volcano Misti was physically one of the hardest days of my life. You wake up early and try to stuff down some breakfast before beginning the hike in the darkness and cold. The air is very thin and so the group hikes slowly, yet I could still feel my heart beating and feel myself breathing hard. The altitude is difficult on your body, and some parts of the trail were very steep. You definitely take breaks every so often, but physically it was incredibly difficult.

But these hardships are what made the hike so gratifying. After hiking for seven hours to the summit, arriving felt so good. I don't want to spoil it by describing it too much, but the view from the top was absolutely incredible. Every one of the people in our group made it, and I think doing it with the group was what made it special. It was awesome to share this experience with them.

One primary suggestion if you decide to climb Misti, or Chachani for that matter: train! The air is thin, so doing cardio is crucial. Cardio and leg workouts especially help. It is also a good idea to take some sort of altitude sickness pills, like the local *soroche* pill, which you can get at any pharmacy in Arequipa. Getting altitude sickness does not depend on your level of physical fitness and can range from headaches to nausea, and might even prevent you from reaching the summit. If you have any questions about what it was like or for advice, please contact anyone from last year's Peru group!

A few quotes from the group after the climb. "That was the best miserable thing I have ever done." "I'm happy I did it now that I'm not on that mountain anymore." "I am so happy we did that but I would not do it again." In my eyes, you will probably never have the opportunity to climb a mountain so cheap and so conveniently. Why not take this opportunity to climb a 19,000 foot volcano!?