

Trip Planner

Peru, Five Ways

New opportunities to experience the Land of the Incas are taking travelers off the beaten path—and well beyond the country's best-known treasure.

BY JESS MCHUGH

Machu Picchu might hog all the attention, but Peru has much more to offer visitors than a single destination: Lake Titicaca and the Pacific shores along the Pan-American Highway north of Lima make for tranquil beach getaways; the capital's food and wine scene is one of the best in South America; and attractions like the Nazca Lines and the Paracas National Reserve provide alternatives for visitors who have already explored Machu Picchu. Peruvian tourism is booming—this year, a record 3.8 million international visitors are expected—and the travel industry has responded with new itineraries and infrastructure to satisfy those hungry for more immersive ways of experiencing the country. Here are five new trips worth taking. →

The ruins of Kuélap in northern Peru.

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An Epic Train Ride Through the Andes

The *Andean Explorer* is the first sleeper in South America and connects regions that have long been inaccessible by car. It combines the luxury of an upscale hotel with the nostalgic romance of long-distance train travel, complete with a piano bar, a soon-to-open spa car, and an observation deck for sipping pisco sours while absorbing the mountain views. Along the route—which stretches 428 miles from Arequipa, in southern Peru, to Cuzco—guests can experience a traditional reed-boat ride on Lake Titicaca, see the 8,000-year-old cave paintings of Sumbay, or stop by the ruins of Raqchi. belmond.com; two-night trips from \$1,405.

A River Cruise in the Amazon Basin

After refurbishing its *Aria Amazon* ship two years ago, **Aqua Expeditions** has debuted special-interest departures. For eco-conscious travelers, naturalist Jean-Michel Cousteau hosts a limited-run series of conservation cruises, with lectures, excursions, and video workshops. Food lovers can sign up for culinary expeditions with Pedro Miguel Schiaffano, chef at Lima's Malabar, which include market tours and cooking classes. And next year the brand plans to introduce wellness-driven itineraries on the Amazon. aquaxpeditions.com; three-night trips from \$3,645.

A Cable Car to Remote Northern Ruins

On the edge of the Peruvian Amazon, the pre-Inca city of **Kuélap** is nearly three times as old as Machu Picchu and covers a much larger area—it's the biggest stone ruin in the Americas. But until this year, the site could be reached only via a four-hour hike or a harrowing two-hour road trip. That all changed in January, with the much-awaited unveiling of a new gondola system from the village of Nuevo Tingo. Visitors can now reach the site in 20 minutes for less than \$6—though with views this extraordinary, you'll wish the ride were twice as long. telecabinaskuelap.com; T+L A-List agent **Gisela Polo** is knowledgeable about the area. gisela@bigfive.com.

A Countrywide Hacienda-Hopping Tour

Boutique tour operator **Aracari** recently launched its *Private Homes of Peru* collection and tour, featuring encounters with notable locals—among them artists, collectors, farmers, and Paso horse trainers—and exclusive stays at haciendas and private residences across the country. A highlight



From top: A new cable car makes the ruins at Kuélap more accessible; a berth on the Belmond *Andean Explorer*.

is **Tacama Winery**, the oldest vineyard in South America, where guests can sample wine and pisco on the 16th-century estate, then spend a night in the home of the winery's proprietors. aracari.com; eight-day trips from \$6,940.

A Guided Trek in the Sacred Valley

This year, **Mountain Lodges of Peru** announced its longest journey yet, the 10-day Grand Andean Experience. Combining elements of the outfitter's Lares and Salkantay treks, the trip starts in the Quechua village of Písaq and culminates in a sunrise ascent of Machu Picchu. En route, you'll hike, bike, ride horses, meet locals, and bed down each night in well-appointed mountaintop retreats. mountainlodgesofperu.com; from \$4,700. ■

