

# Culture Box



# PERU



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# INTRODUCTION

Peru has three distinct geographic regions: *la costa*, *la sierra* y *la selva*: coast, highland and jungle. The Pacific Ocean coastline is dominated by desert landscapes, to the high Andes Mountains to the eastern rainforests. This culture box features items that tell stories of Peru's past and present and aims to provide resources to approach Peru in a multidisciplinary way.



## THIS BOX INCLUDES:

1. Llamas
2. Miniature Quechua Man
3. Miniature Quechua Woman
4. Andean Panpipe
5. Coin Purse & Soles
6. Wool Purse
7. Gourd Bowls
8. Copper Plate
9. Textile
10. Images from Peru



# LLAMAS



## DESCRIPTION

A visitor to the Peruvian Andes would encounter the wild **vicuña** and the **guanaco**, from which **alpacas** and **llamas** were domesticated hundreds of years ago.

Llamas are domestic animals that are used by peoples of the Andes Mountains. People have used llamas as a means of transporting goods and typically are saddled with loads of 50-75 pounds and with this load can travel up to 20 miles in one day.

Alpacas are much smaller and much woolier than llamas. Their hair is used for making a number of knitted and woven products and much of the hand-made clothing in South American markets are made with alpaca fur.





# MINIATURE QUECHUA MAN & WOMAN



## DESCRIPTION

Quechua peoples of the Central Andes are direct descendants of the Incas. The Inca Empire had an expansive governing structure and existed for a century before the arrival of the Spanish in the early 1500s. After the Spanish captured Atahualpa (the Inca king), the Inca Empire suffered. Today, most of the Quechua people in Peru still live in the Andean highlands.

The term Quechua refers more to the language than the people. Quechua was the language of the Inca and is still spoken by millions of people in Peru today. Unlike many other indigenous languages, Quechua is the official language of Peru.



# ANDEAN PAN PIPES



## DESCRIPTION

These panpipe instruments, called **zampoñas**, are a series of hollow reeds found near lakes in the Andes Mountains. The reeds are cut into different lengths and bound together to create a variety of notes. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, wind and percussion instruments were the dominant musical sound. Musical instruments, such as the zampoña, were an integral part of life and ritual processions in ancient Andean cultures.



# COIN PURSE & SOLES



## DESCRIPTION

The sol (plural: soles) is the currency of Peru. Many of the coins depict the Coat of arms of Peru, and other symbols of Pre-Columbian Peru. The sol was the name of currency from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1985, and was reinstated in 1991. The Peruvian Inti was the national currency for six years 1985-91.

The coins are held in a colorful woven coin purse.



# WOOL PURSE



## DESCRIPTION

This is a woven bag made of alpaca wool. Alpacas are domesticated animals that are shorn once a year for their wool. The fleece is usually used for weaving or sold at the market. Pre-Inca civilizations in Peru enjoyed fine garments made of woven alpaca fleece and their wealth was measured by the amount of alpaca wool they owned.



# GOURD BOWLS



## DESCRIPTION

Gourds are large fruits with hard skins that may be dried, hollowed and carved. For more than 4000 years, Peru has been home to gourd artists. In the Andean Mountains, it is common to record celebrations, oral traditions, and stories onto gourds. They are typically carved by hand and therefore no two are alike.





# COPPER PLATE



## DESCRIPTION

This is copper decorative plate that could be hung on the wall or displayed in a home. The center of the plate depicts a llama, as noted by the saddle on the back of the llama.

Llamas have been used by people in Peru for thousands of years for transporting goods, as they are able to carry over  $\frac{1}{4}$  of their weight.



# TEXTILE



## DESCRIPTION

The national animal of Peru is the vicuña (Spanish: *vicuña*) and is found depicted on many items of clothing and decorations.

Vicuna are shy and easily startled animals that can run up to 30 miles per hour. They are about five feet tall and usually weigh less than 150 pounds. They live high in the Andes Mountains and have a very large heart in order to survive the high altitudes. Their coat is very fine, warm and fragile, and is very expensive. The vicuña is a protected animal.

