

CONCHA!

A THOUGHTFUL GUIDE TO LIMA

WHAT'S LIMA ABOUT? | IF LIMA WERE A PLAYLIST | THE CLAY OF LIMA

We spoke with seven creatives to craft something that feels like advice from a local friend — the kind that helps you avoid the tourist traps and get to the heart of the city.



Miraflores de la Virgen, Lima, Peru



WHAT'S LIMA ABOUT?

Based in Lima, Puerto Rican journalist Bianca Prado explores cities through the rhythms of everyday life. She recently wrote a 36 Hours guide to Lima for The New York Times.

If the energy of Lima could be captured in sound, what would its rhythms, pauses, and crescendos reveal?

Bianca Prado:

The noise of Lima is essential to understanding the city — it's chaotic, loud, almost overwhelming at first. I was honestly scared to move here because of it. What struck me most were the combis and minibuses. On busy roads, the shouting, honking, and engine roars create their own kind of music. Even the bells on bicycles hint at a city always on edge — always in a rush.

But once you settle in, you start noticing other layers. There are spaces for creation and pause. Peruvians love music — salsa, cumbia, reggaetón, music from all over the world.

These sounds are everywhere. There are Peñas, traditional venues where the outside world disappears behind thick walls and live música criolla takes over. At the same time, I've been to rooftop rock concerts that echo across entire neighborhoods.

Public parks also offer a different soundtrack: soccer games, birthday parties, a woman doing Zumba by the malecón. There's noise, yes, but also joy — and a strong sense of place.

CONCHA!

is a publication made by locals, for those who arrive not as tourists, but as invited guests.



This edition was shaped by a small team of friends.

Randou González curated and edited the issue. He also runs Days in Lima, a platform for travelers seeking slower, more thoughtful ways to experience the city.

Manuel Bonilla directed the audiovisual work and contributed illustrations. He is also the founder of Agua Floride, a project that reimagines Latin American visual traditions through contemporary print.

Anahy Ocharan, who also appears in these pages, guided the visual direction of the magazine. Her work as an illustrator and tattoo artist reflects on identity, memory, and the body as archive.

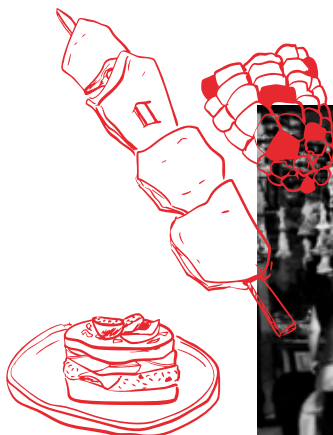
Enzo Barreto supported production and media planning, helping bring the issue into being with quiet care and precision.

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One thing that's always surprised me is how certain public spaces are restricted. You're not allowed to have a picnic or walk on the grass "because it's nice." But people still find ways to claim space. You see community gatherings, family parties, even art fairs in abandoned areas. It might reflect Peru's informal economy, but it also speaks to the city's creative drive.

In a country where cultural projects often lack public funding, I'm constantly impressed by the resilience of self-managed initiatives — whether it's illustration markets, textile collectives, or art shows. That sound — of people taking space and making something out of it — that's very Lima. And it's something I really love.



Renzo Boggio:

Lima is visually rich — culturally intense, historically dense. It's a fertile place for ideas. But there's always a risk of slipping into trends, of mimicking styles without authenticity. Our creative identity is rooted in a long tradition — one that goes back to pre-Columbian times — and that should push us to innovate, not just replicate.

How do you navigate that heritage while striving to innovate?

Do those forces collide in your work?

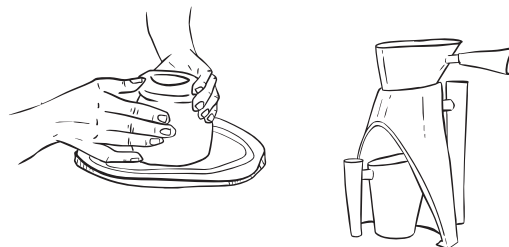
Renzo Boggio:

People often associate contemporary Peruvian ceramics with Nazca motifs, Paracas geometries, and ancient vessels. That heritage gives us a strong visual identity. But if I want to engage with it, I have to reinterpret it — not just copy it. That legacy is powerful, but it's also the "backpack" we carry as creators.

In a world obsessed with speed, what does ceramics — slow, tactile, textured — offer us that we lack?

Elizabeth Vasquez:

Ceramics teaches you that you can't control time — but you can hold a moment in your hands. It slows everything down. It invites you to pause, to reflect, and to feel the weight of time as something physical and real.



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CLAY OF LIMA

Ceramics in Lima sits between ancestral tradition and a booming culinary scene. We spoke with three artists shaping this intersection: Víctor Sakata, professor at PUCP; Elizabeth Vásquez, founder of the studio Polen; and Renzo Boggio, artist and creator of one of the city's most recognized ceramic brands.

Does living in Lima challenge or amplify your voice as an artist?

Victor Sakata:

Lima, with all its noise and chaos, has an ambivalent effect on art. It's not a city that easily embraces creative work — and that's precisely what pushes us to carve out more art-friendly spaces. That tension, that constant love-hate relationship, becomes a challenge that drives us to showcase and reinvent what art can be.

Do you see your work as part of a broader cultural movement in Lima's artistic scene?

Elizabeth Vasquez:

In the past, art and design were kept in separate spheres. But today, ceramics is becoming a meeting point — where sculpture, painting, and craft intersect. It opens up new ways of thinking, far beyond function.

Ceramics in Lima is part of something larger — linked not only to the plastic arts but also to Peru's culinary boom, industrial design, and tableware production. It lives at the intersection of innovation, identity, and research — even academically. It's a medium that's both traditional and forward-looking.

Does Lima have a unique voice in ceramics compared to other cities?

IF LIMA WERE A PLAYLIST

Cristian Basilio works quietly behind the scenes, guiding the careers of some of Peru's most critically acclaimed and internationally recognized musical voices — Lala, Hit La Rosa, Nero Lvigi, and Los Hermanos Yaipén. His work bridges genres, generations, and the shifting rhythms of a city in constant motion.

Its Anthem:

To capture the essence of Lima, I'd choose a rock track — something that blends intensity with identity. Triciclo Perú by Los Mojarras is a strong contender: a fusion of rock, cumbia, and folk rhythms that tells the story of Andean migrants overcoming hardship. It's raw, urgent, and deeply tied to the city's working-class backbone — the perfect anthem for Lima.

Its Guilty Pleasure:

Without question, it would be a song born from migrant culture. Muchacho Provinciano by Chacalón comes to mind. It reflects the experience of those often rendered invisible by the city — rural migrants whose lives are rarely part of Lima's official narrative. While the city loves to show off its coastal beauty and cosmopolitan face, songs like this reveal the stories hidden underneath.

Lima's Hidden Gem:

A track that embraces Lima's complexity — its contradictions and convergences. La Marea by Hit La Rosa stands out. It merges cumbia, salsa, and electronic textures into a sound that feels contemporary, playful, and slightly rebellious — much like Lima itself today.

LIMA'S ARTISTS GUIDE TO LIMA

We invited three creatives to reflect on how they connect with Lima — through food, movement, and quiet moments. Ebelin Ortiz is an actress and singer; Anahy Ocharan is a designer and tattoo artist; and Bianca Prado is a journalist from Puerto Rico who now calls the city home.

RESTAURANTS

If a dear friend returned to Lima, where would you take them to feel at home again?

Ebelin Ortiz:

I have a soul sister who visits often, and every time, we go to Isolina. It's her favorite place — it serves home-style dishes that really feel like family. If I want hígado encabollado, a traditional Afro-Peruvian dish, I know I'll find it there. It's a place that brings back memories.

Anahy Ocharan:

What locals miss most when they're away is comfort food — pollo a la brasa, ceviche, maybe a pan con pejerrey. I'd take someone to two old, family-run spots in Barranco: El Rustic Cevichería and Pollos Berna. In a neighborhood that's become so gentrified, these places still feel genuine.

Bianca Prado:

I'd choose Sonia, in Chorrillos. It's warm, welcoming, and the fish comes straight from the nearby harbor. Lima's focus on artisanal fishing really stands out to me — where I'm from, in Puerto Rico, it's less common. Sonia was started by a fisherman and his wife, and the whole place reflects that story. It's a reminder that you're in a city by the sea.

GASTRONOMY

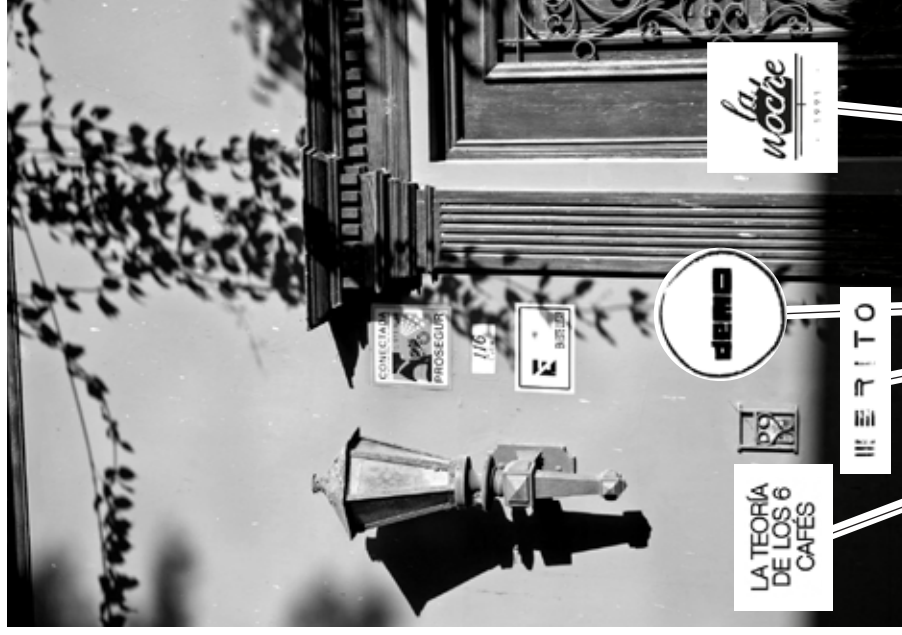
Central shines on the global stage, but who is quietly shaping the next chapter of Peruvian gastronomy?

Ebelin Ortiz:

Peruvian food is about family, gathering, cooking with love. I cook sometimes — not often — but when I do, it's a way to care for the people I love. That's why I admire José del Castillo's restaurants — Isolina, La Red, Los Reyes. They're soulful. Of course, Central and Astrid & Gastón are exquisite. But I always end up preferring the homestyle dishes.

Bianca Prado:

I really admire what chef Juan Luis Martínez is doing at Merito and Clon. He brings in ingredients and dishes from Venezuela and other parts of Latin America. That's exciting, because Lima has changed — so many cultures are part of the city now. His cooking reflects that shift. Just like Chinese and Japanese cuisines transformed Peruvian food — chifa, nikkei — we're now seeing a broader Latin American influence.



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we talk about are here
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DANCING

Where does Lima come alive through dance — a place where movement and music merge?

Anahy Ocharan:

I love Monday jazz nights at La Noche. They're free, and there's always someone new playing. Last time, a guy sang in this rock-jazz style with a woman, then jumped into a trumpet solo while others played cajón and drums — it was amazing.

I also remember jam sessions at El Gato Tulipán, where anyone can join in. On Tuesdays, there's salsa at Sargento Pimental. I'm not a great dancer, but I love watching and listening to the live music.

For nights out, I've been to Terapia, a new salsa spot in Barranco, and Culpa, which has a great LGBTQ+ vibe. I usually end up at Discotobia or Rítmica Paraiso for disco and techno.

COFFEE

Which café offers more than just a cup of coffee—a space where moments pause and connections flow naturally?

Ebelin Ortiz:

In Barranco, I like Singular, on the malecón. It's a lovely space, and I can take my dog, Paco. Sitting down for a coffee is a small ritual — a quiet moment for yourself.

Bianca Prado:

My go-to is La Teoría de los Seis Cafés. It's close to home, so I walk there most days. It's warm, informal, and doesn't overcomplicate the coffee. They focus on quality, not pretension. It feels easy and welcoming — you don't have to be a coffee expert to enjoy it.

Anahy Ocharan:

I like Casa Lola, a small café on Domeyer Street. Their pecan alfajor is my favorite. The lighting is warm, the service is great — it sets the mood.

Alanya has incredible croissants — the Nutella and almond ones are a must. I recently tried Mr. Jas and had a long chat with the owner while sipping an americano and eating a croissant. If I need to focus or plan something, Coleccionista Café is perfect — it's ideal for working without interruptions.