

Atlantis in Peru

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After looking at the Theme Index of 2022, I noticed a severe lack of theme parks in South America. Being Latina, it is something that I realized growing up, but I didn't know if it was just I was never taken to theme parks or if they didn't exist. The answer is, they simply aren't there, at least not to the extent and amount that other areas of the world have theme parks. Therefore I decided to change at least the idea of it. The operator that I chose is Kerzner International and the location I chose is Chiclayo, Peru.

The reason I chose Peru is because on the map of the Theme Index you can see that Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile all have parks. The only one missing is Peru, and it would conveniently complete the circle of themed parks in South America. Peru is full of history and culture. Its globally popular gastronomy is just a testament of the global culture that the country has with specific dishes clearly influenced by Spain, Italy, China, and Japan. (Aguirre-Sosa et al., 2024) The reason as to why I chose Chiclayo as the city or area is because it isn't the biggest city in Peru. The biggest city is Lima, but it is extremely overpopulated with an estimated 11 million residents (*Lima population 2024*), compared to Chiclayo which only has 552 thousand residents. (*Chiclayo population 2024*) The city is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in Peru, so it isn't a completely unknown city, but it does have space for development. It has an international airport, the Captain Jose Abelardo Quiñones Gonzalez International Airport, and is also used as a connection point for various cities in northern Peru with bus companies providing transportation throughout them, as well as being at the end of the Panamerican Highway. Therefore, it is highly accessible from other places in Peru and the world. Due to it being the only park in Peru and its proximity to the ocean, it would be best to make it a water park at a regional level.

The reason I chose Kerzner International as the operator is because after looking at all of the operators in the world, specifically in South America, I noticed that a lot of operators tend to stay in one place. Mexico has Grupo Xcaret and Ventura Entertainment, and they seem to be content

staying in Mexico. For the other countries, the parks for those operators seemed to have been a one off park, not necessarily a franchise. I think if Disney opened a park in Peru, it would either go extremely well because Peruvians love novelty and anything new, or poorly because they would feel like the park is taking away from smaller business. The same would go for Universal. Kerzner International is the operator that is responsible for creating Atlantis in both the Bahamas originally, and in Dubai. They also have other resorts in Morocco and Greece. (*Luxury hospitality brands: Kerzner International*) They have experience in creating very different beautiful upscale resorts in different countries, catering to the culture and wants of the people wanting to stay there. The park that I personally had in mind for Peru was going to be similar to the Atlantis in the Bahamas, but with Incan history. It would have a small focus on the food with a possible year-round food festival, and ride and attractions showcasing the different types of pre-Columbian civilization

The biggest issue that I found with Peru is the political unrest that the country has a habit of finding itself in. It is a newly democratic country, with democracy taking place only about 24 years ago. There is a strain between poorer and indigenous areas against national authorities. (*Unrest on repeat: Plotting a route to stability in Peru 2024*) To put it in perspective, as far as I've been aware of politics in Peru, there has not been a single president carry their full term. They are either impeached, thrown in jail, or flee the country. This directly affects the residents of Peru, not the tourism since most of this is kept under the water by the press. They were also one of the countries most affected by COVID-19, not only with economic loss but with most lives lost per capita. The nice things about Peru, other than the food, is the history and how proud Peruvians are of their culture and history. Therefore a park that values that history and culture that both the indigenous people and immigrants can love can bring a kind of harmony that the country is missing, as well as bringing economic growth to the Northern part of Peru.

As of current day, Kerzner has kept to this horizontal line starting at Morocco and ending in Dubai, with Greece in the middle. They no longer own the Atlantis in the Bahamas since it was transferred to Brookfield Asset Management in 2012. (Atlantis Bahamas, *History*) I think the biggest difference will be the location. Conveniently the coast of Peru has very similar terrain to one of their Dubai resorts, Bab Al Shams, with this desert-y oasis type of beach. So it might honestly be a mix of Bab Al Shams and their Atlantis in the Bahamas, in order to give it the novelty that Peruvians crave. In regards to food and beverage, luckily Peru has their own type of liquor that is extremely popular there, pisco, and as well as their own coke product, Inca-cola, which is more popular globally. There is also a bunch of different restaurants and franchises that could cater and serve at their park to give outside guests more of an authentic cuisine feel.

#### Sources

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