

PRINCIPAL ATTRACTIONS

PRIVATE SERVICES– IN SPANISH, ENGLISH OR OTHER LANGUAGES; SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

INTRODUCTION

The city of Cusco, the ancient capital of the Incan Empire, was placed on the World Cultural Heritage List by UNESCO in 1983, and is without a doubt one of the most important destinations in Peru. There are Incan buildings waiting for you to discover them among its cobble-stoned streets, ones like the Koricancha and the palace of Inca Roca as well as Andean Baroque structures from the Colonial Period like the Cathedral and the Church of the Company of Christ. In addition, you can visit the picturesque neighborhood of San Blas where the best artisans in the department have set up their workshops. This magical city also has an exciting nightlife with cafes, restaurants, and bars for all tastes. Just ten minutes away from the city, there are the massive walls of the Sacsayhuamán fortress, and a few kilometers from there, you find the archeological sites of Qenko, Pukapukara, and Tambomachay, Incan buildings constructed completely with stone.

There are also the towns of Písac, Maras, Chinchero, and Ollantaytambo, which are spread throughout the Sacred Valley of the Incas, one hour from Cusco. From there, it is possible to catch the train to Machu Picchu. Another way of getting to the citadel is by following one of the Inca Trails, a spectacular network of pathways that snake their way among the snow covered mountains, rivers, and overwhelming countryside. This is one of the best trekking routes in the world, since scattered throughout it, you find remarkable archeological sites and areas rich in unique plant and animal species.

The enigmatic complex of Machu Picchu, the most important and beautiful legacy of the ancient Peruvian, is part of the Historic Sanctuary of the same name, which is also one of the few places in the Americas placed on both the World Cultural and Natural Heritage Lists by UNESCO. It is located high on top of a mountain and complements the exuberant nature that surrounds it, creating a one of a kind place in the world.

Informes y reservas

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MAIN SQUARE

When the Incas ruled Cusco, it was known as the Huacaypata, or “place of weeping or of meeting”, and was the backdrop to sacred ceremonies held there. It has likewise been the stage to several key historical events.

SAINT DOMINIC CONVENT

Build overtop the remains of the Incan Qoricancha, or Temple of the Sun, which according to the Incas was the exact center of the world. A tour of the place includes the remaining sections of the old Incan temple, royal apartments, three other minor temples (dedicated to the moon, the stars and the rainbow) and the circular tower, which is the signature of this landmark.

NEXT TO THE ARCHBISHOP PALACE ON HATUNRUMIYOC

STREET, is an ancient Incan wall, a famous example of the notable stone work of the Incas, who accomplished themselves in polishing and fitting together blocks of stone. This is the wall that contains the celebrated **12-angle stone**, famous for the perfect fit of each one of its corners.

SACSAYHUAMÁN ARCHEOLOGICAL COMPLEX: THE FORTRESS, QENKO, PUKAPUKARA, AND TAMBOMACHAY

There are 33 archeological sites within this area, yet obviously the most important is Sacsayhuamán itself. Its name means “house of the sun”, and every June 24th, the Inti Raymi or Festival of the Sun is celebrated at this spot. Other sites include:

- 1) Qenko, which means “labyrinth”, that researchers believe was built around 1500 A.D. and may have been the center of sun, moon and star worship.
- 2) Pukapukara features chambers, inner plazas, aqueducts, stairways and trails and seems to have served as a tambo, or an inn, where the Incan Emperor might have stopped and rested for the night.
- 3) Tambomachay, which some historians hypothesize that might have been a place for water worship and earth regeneration.

CHOQUEQUIRAO ARCHEOLOGICAL COMPLEX, 150 MILES FROM ABANCAY (APURÍMAC)

Another one of the lost cities in the Vilcabamba Valley. It was within this region that the Incas took refuge, starting in 1536 after

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the Spanish Conquest. It contains 9 distinct architectural groups, all made out of stone. There are hundreds of terraces, rooms and irrigation systems. The only route to this site starts in the town of Cachora, in the department of Apurímac.

CHINCHERO

An attractive church built during the Colony is the highlight of this village and on the inside hang lovely paintings from the Cusco School. Yet, it is on Sundays that the action really starts to happen when area merchants and farmers assemble at the flea market to buy and sell, using the age old method of bartering for goods. Likewise, you can visit impressive archeological remains in the area.

MARAS

Something very peculiar about this town is that you can still see the original Indian aristocratic coats of arms hanging on the outside of the church and houses. It is also the starting point for visiting the nearby Maras salt flats, a view of a patchwork of 3,000 wells that have been used since the Incan Empire.

MORAY AGRICULTURAL TERRACES

An impressive spectacle – a circular system of terraces, possibly used for agricultural experimentation since the concentric nature of the circles enabled its engineers to generate different temperatures and thereby reproduce all the ecological tiers found within the Incan Empire.

OLLANTAYTAMBO

It is called “a living Incan town” since people there still follow traditions and customs passed down through the years. The archeological complex of Ollantaytambo includes a temple, agricultural terraces and an urban sector. When the Incas were in power, it was an chief administrative center and a fort, as the towering walls and imposing fortified towers so readily demonstrate. A short distance from Ollantaytambo is the village of Willoc, whose inhabitants speak Quechua and dress in bright red outfits to differentiate themselves from the other peoples in the region and mark themselves as members of a single ayllu (family).

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MACHU PICCHU

The city of Machu Picchu is the department of Cusco's most important tourist attraction. Discovered to the world in 1911 by the American explorer, Hiram Bingham, this city is considered to be one of the most extraordinary examples of scenic architecture in the world.

The city of Machu Picchu itself was built at the top of a granite mountain. The Incas, using ingenious engineering techniques, were able to transport heavy stone blocks up the mountain side, and once there, they used their excellent masonry skills to produce amazingly polished stones that fit together perfectly

Fuente: Promperu. La información contenida en este documento es una enumeración de atractivos y servicios a disposición del viajero en toda la región. Para su actualización, PromPerú se ha servido de fuentes oficiales de información como: Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales (INRENA), Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INC), Instituto Geográfico Nacional (IGN), Servicio Nacional de Meteorología e Hidrología del Perú (SENAMHI) y la Dirección Regional de Comercio Exterior y Turismo.

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