

PRINCIPAL ATTRACTIONS

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

INTRODUCTION

Today, the city of Puno (3,287 masl), which lies on the shores of Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world, is the folklore capital of Peru and the site of the Feast of the Virgen de la Candelaria. In the outskirts, you can visit the spectacular Chullpas de Sillustani, a complex of impressive burial towers built by the Kollas, Juli, famous for its beautiful Colonial churches, Lampa with its vice royal church built between 1675 and 1685, Llachón, a community that still maintains its centuries old customs and cultural expressions, and Pucará, known for its pre-Inca pottery and for the “toritos de Pucará” that the artisans of today create from clay.

The lake contains numerous islands whose inhabitants continue to live as their ancestors have in custom and tradition. The Uros an example of this; this people group lives on “floating islands” that they have artificially made entirely of totora reeds, and they navigate in their traditional boats also made out of totora reeds. Taquile, Suasi, and Amantaní are known for their kindness of their residents, their ancestral skill in weaving, their pre-Columbian constructions, and lovely countryside. The Titicaca National Reserve (36,180 hectares) protects extensive stretches of totora reeds and various species of plants and animals.

KUNTUR WASI LOOKOUT

2 km / 1 mile from downtown Puno (10 minutes by car)
Kuntur Wasi means “house of the condor” and offers an unsurpassed view of Puno and Lake Titicaca. You must climb a large flight of steps to get there.

TITICACA NATIONAL RESERVE

This Protected Natural Area was created in 1978 in order to preserve the natural resources characteristic of Lake Titicaca and the highland ecosystem. It covers an area of 36.180 hectares. In the reserve, dozens of birds, fish, and amphibious species have been registered like flamingos or parihuana, Andean geese, seagulls, Titicaca grebes, chullumpis, and Andean lapwings as well as numerous endangered species. You will find twelve varieties of aquatic plants representative of the lake flora, the most remarkable being the totora reeds and algae.

Informes y reservas

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LAKE TITICACA

10 blocks from the Main Square

This lake is very important in Andean mythology since, according to legend, Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo, children of the sun god and founders of the Inca Empire, emerged from its waters.

Peru and Bolivia share sovereignty over this navigable lake, the highest in the world (3810 masl / 12.497 fasl). It covers an area of 8559 km² (3305 miles²), a maximum depth of 283 meters (928 feet), and the average water temperature varies from October to May between 9°C (48°F) and 11°C (52°F) and from June to September between -7°C (19°F) and -10°C (14°F). Moreover, the lake tempers the area since without its presence, there would not be life at that altitude.

On the Peruvian side of Lake Titicaca, there are several islands; the natural islands include Amantani, Taquile, Soto, and Anapia, and the artificial islands are the ones that the Uros people have built, each one offering different attractions. Along the shores of the lake, totora reeds grow where different birds and fish like the carachis, ispis, bogas, umantos, suches (an endanger specie), silverfish, and trout call home. All these species are native of the area and are prized for their high nutritional value.

FLOATING ISLANDS OF THE UROS

5 km / 3 miles west of the Puno harbor (20 minutes by boat)

The Uros Islands (3810 masl / 12.497 fasl) number around 20 and are located in the Bay of Puno. Three to ten Uro-Aymaras families live on each one. They roof their houses with totora reed carpets, although some families have replaced their traditional roofs by metal ones. The largest Islands are Tupiri, Santa María, Tribuna, Toranipata, Chumi, Paraiso, Kapi, Titino, Tinajero, and Negrone. The Uros call themselves Kotsuña, “the lake people”, and their origins go back to eras before the Incas. They hunt wild birds and maintain traditional fishing methods, especially those used for the carachi and the silverfish. The men are skillful handlers of the totora reed boats, and the women are expert knitters.

The characteristic cold and dry weather of the region is tempered in this area thanks to the constantly evaporating water of the large lake.

AMANTANI ISLAND

36 km / 22 miles northeast of the Puno harbor (3 hours and 30 minutes by boat)

Located at 3187 masl (10.453 fasl), Amantani covers some 9 km² (3.5 miles²). The flora is characterized by the presence of bushes like the muña, the kantuta, the sage, the tola and the patamuña. Eight communities live on the island and make their living from growing potatoes, corn, oca, quinoa, lima beans, and green peas, and their most representative handcrafts are textiles and stone carvings.

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Among its natural attractions, there are two lookouts on the highest part offering a view of the entire lake, some pre-Hispanic remains, ceremonial centers and a mummy cemetery.

TAQUILE ISLAND

35 km / 22 miles east of the Puno port (3 hours by boat)

Its approximate size is of 6 km² (2 miles²) and the altitude between the port and the town varies slightly from 3810 to 3950 masl (12.497 to 12.956 fasl). The maximum temperature there is 23°C (66°F), and the minimum is 7°C (37°F).

Pre-Inca vestiges are found in the highest part of the island.

During the Colonial period and up to the first years of the twentieth century, it was used as a political prison, until the island became property of the Taquile people in 1970.

The town of the same name, Taquile, is characterized by its friendly inhabitants, who maintain their customs and traditional clothing. They distinguish themselves by their detailed, fine, and colorful textiles with symmetrical decorations and symbols that reflect their way of life, customs, and Andean beliefs.

CHUCUITO

18 km / 11 miles south of Puno (15 minutes by car)

It is also known as the Royal Treasury City because it used to be the tax collection center during the Colonial era. It features a main square and the Renaissance churches of Santo Domingo (sixteenth century) and La Asuncion (seventeenth century).

SILLUSTANI ARCHEOLOGICAL COMPLEX

34 km / 21 miles north of Puno (35 minutes by car)

This complex stands on the shore of Lake Umayo. It is famous for its chullpas, large circular fortified burial towers for the main leaders of the early villages of the Collao plateau. Some are 12 meters high (39 feet), and remarkable for their shape, thinner at the base and wider at the top. Close to the archeological complex is the site museum where different pieces from the Colla, Tiahuanaco, and Inca cultures are preserved.

LLACHON

74 km / 46 miles northeast of Puno, on the shores of Lake Titicaca (2 hours by car)

This community of around 1300 inhabitants still maintains its customs and native cultural manifestations, and its main activities are farming, cattle breeding, fishing, and handicraft. Llachon can be reached by motorboat from Puno harbor and from the Islands of Taquile and Amantani or by land from Puno or Juliaca. The place offers experimental tourism, "living tourism", allowing visitors to stay with families of the community.

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COMMUNITY OF CAMBRIA AND SUASI ISLAND (3810 MASL / 12.497 FASL)

157 km / 98 miles northeast of Puno (3 hours and 30 minutes by car)

Cambria is located on the shores of Lake Titicaca and you can participate in farming activities with the people, fish, and watch artisans create textiles there. There are also nice walks to take around the town. From this community, there are row-boats taking passengers to the Suasi Island (approximately 20 minutes), which features a lodge built with stones, wood, straw, and totora reeds from the region and completely ran on solar energy. This island is 43 hectares in surface and houses a great variety of plants and wildlife. You find aromatic, medicinal, and grass plants, natural pastures, bushes, and trees. There are protected areas for birds, such as choccos, cormorants, ducks, grebes, hummingbirds, caracaras, Andean ibises, etc. There are also vicuñas and vizcachas, as well as potato, oca, quinoa, corn and lupine farming plots.

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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