

Essentials

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).

• **Chincheru.** 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.

From Cusco:

• **Oropesa.** Traditionally called the “Land of Bread”. Its handmade ovens, centuries old, are still used on a daily basis to bake the delicious country bread called chutas.

• **Pikillacta.** This city predates the Incas as experts estimate it reached its zenith somewhere between 800 A.D. and 1100 A.D. during the time period known as the Wari regional confederation.

• **Andahuaylillas.** The church in this village is called the “Peruvian Sistine Chapel”, a designation based upon its magnificently painted walls. A delight to the eyes.

• **Huaro.** Some of the walls in this town’s church have frescos attributed to Tadeo Escalante (1803), one of the last painters of the Cusco School.

• **Tipón archeological complex.** According to legend, Incan Emperor Wiracocha ordered royal gardens to be built here. It is also evidence of the high level of development reached by the Incas in their construction of terraces and irrigation ditches.

• **Raqchi archeological complex.** It dates back to the 15th century and considered one of the boldest

of all Incan constructions. The Wiracocha Temple is by far the best part, built of adobe walls on volcanic rock foundations. The community of Raqchi is just a few minutes away and the villagers there have developed their own special form of experiential tourism.

• **Choquequirao archeological complex, 150 miles from Abancay (Apurimac).** Another one of the lost cities in the Vilcabamba Valley. It was within this region that the Incas took refuge, starting in 1536 after 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 Apurimac.

WHEN?

Holy Week, March or April, moveable. Holy Monday is day of the procession and blessing of the Lord of Earthquakes, the patron saint of Cusco.

Corpus Christi, May or June, moveable. A massive procession of 16 patron saints from different churches takes place.

Qoyllur Rit’i, May or June, moveable. Its name means “Brightness of Snow” and it is a mixing of ancient Andean religions, dealing with mountain worship (apus – mountain protectors), with Catholicism. Some 50,000 people from different regions of the South take part, all decked out in their traditional costumes as they climb the mountain to the Sinakara Sanctuary. Pilgrims usually carry stones of different shapes and sizes that will later be piled on top of each other to form an apacheta (“stone mound”). On the way back, they carry blocks of ice on their backs.

Inti Raymi, June 24th. A staging of the festival of the Sun god. Celebrations begin at the Qoricancha and end at Sacsayhuamán. It is a sight full and utterly rooted in Indian traditions.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16th. It takes place in the town of Paucartambo, a vibrant celebration of dancing, full of color and traditions, and a religious procession of the Virgin Mary.



CUSCO

“Stand in awe of the Center of the World, the lost city of Machu Picchu and the extraordinary Inca Trails.”

One of a kind architecture plus a profound feeling of history equals one of the most seductive cities on the planet: Cusco. Radiant by day, Cusco’s main square dresses itself up for a party at night, soft yellow lights illuminating lovely arcades and the head turning facades of the Cathedral and the Church of the Company of Jesus. Then, upon leaving the city limits one comes face to face with what looks like a sort of an Incan theme park in the fortress of Sacsayhuaman—with menhirs standing up to 29.5 feet and weighing 77 tons. A little farther along, there are other sacred sites where people went to worship their deities, like Qenko, or the very popular Baños del Inca (Inca baths) or Tambomachay, a fascinating site dedicated to worship water. Then, there is the Sacred Valley of the Incas, an overcharged natural setting. Eye pleasing agricultural terraces descend down the mountains, like giant stair steps. The air is filled with the scent of baking bread, prepared in mud ovens, and endless fields of corn dance with the wind. Under the intense blue sky sit picturesque villages like Pisac, Yucay and Ollantaytambo, and on their outskirts lie noteworthy Incan palaces. Machu Picchu, the magical citadel, brings the visitor within reach of an intact ancient world where history is found in every nook and cranny. Lest we forget, recently opened Choquequirao, is another Incan site that takes the breath away. In Cusco, the word mystical gets its true meaning.

CUSCO 3,399 msnm / 11,152 fasl

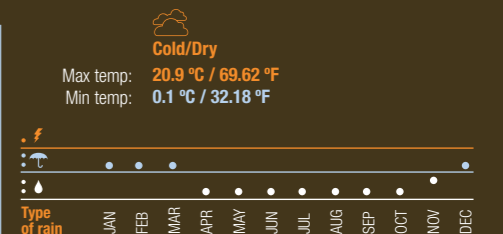
How to get there?

From Lima: 1,78 miles / **21 hr.**
Por la vía Nasca, Abancay, Cusco.

From Arequipa: 832 miles
From Nasca (ICA): 1,082 miles
From Puno: 627 miles

Puno - Cusco: 9 hr.
Cusco - Aguas Calientes: 3 hr.

From Lima: **1 h** Daily flights
From Arequipa: **35 min.** Daily flights
From Puerto Maldonado: **30 min.** Daily flights
From La Paz, Bolivia: **1 hr.** Flights every other day



We cannot limit the wonders of Cusco to just Machu Picchu. To begin with, there is a fantastic city, rich cultural expressions, and many other striking archeological complexes scattered across a truly amazing geography.



Routes & length of stay

4 days
Minimum recommended length of stay

- 2 days City and surrounding area: Sacsayhuamán, Qenko, Pukapukara and Tambomachay

- 1 day Machu Picchu – take the train from the city to the mountain

- 4 day Inca Trail trek to Machu Picchu
1 day trip: Sacred Valley of the Incas: Pisac, Ollantaytambo and Chinchero

- 1 day Southern circuit: Pikillacta and Andahuaylillas

- 3 days Suykutambo Canyon

- 4 days Trek to Choquequirao

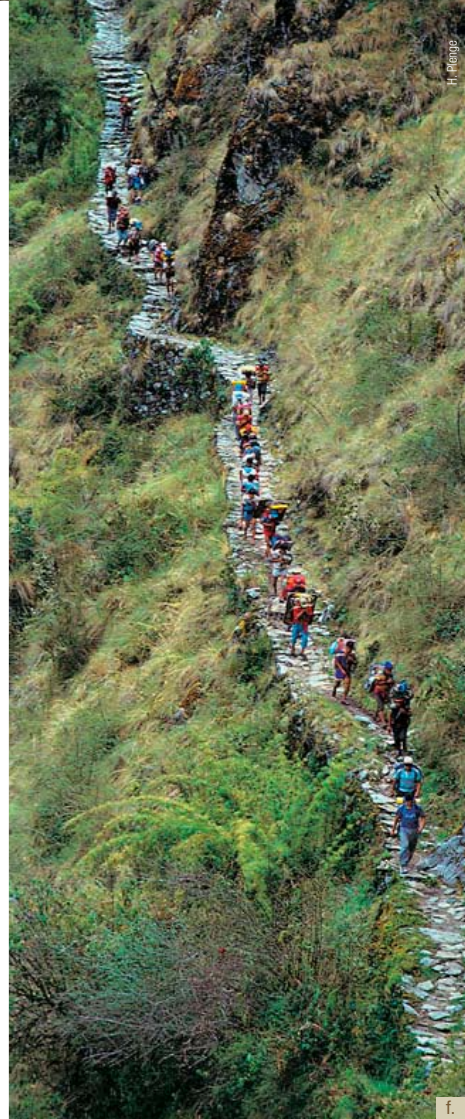
a. La historia vive en cada uno de los pobladores del Cusco.
 b. Descubra cada sorpresa que la ciudad del Cusco le depara.
 c. Ollantaytambo guarda con celo la historia inca.
 d. No se pierda uno de los espectáculos más impresionantes.
 e. Los Apus, los espíritus de las montañas, son los guardianes del Cusco.
 f. Recorra los caminos que conectaron el Tahuantinsuyo.
 g. Descubra verdaderas joyas de arte.



- 1 Sacsayhuamán
- 2 Tambomachay
- 3 Pisac
- 4 Yucay
- 5 Ollantaytambo
- 6 Machu Picchu
- 7 Choquequirao

LEYEND

- Department borderline
- Capital city
- Asphalted road
- Non-asphalted road
- Airport
- World heritage Site - UNESCO
- iperú offices
Tourist information and assistance



Lodging and tourist services

Cusco has any and all types of accommodation, from luxurious 5 star hotels with fine restaurants to hostels and family houses. The village of Machu Picchu, also known as Aguas Calientes (Hot Springs) does have modest lodgings and 3 star hotels, and, at the entrance of Machu Picchu, there are restrooms, telephones, a restaurant and one hotel. As for other services, you can rent hiking, camping and rafting gear. Transportation includes buses and cars and you can find agencies offering guided and specialized tours.

Recommended for

Archeology lovers, who, besides Machu Picchu, can visit other fabulous sights, like Choquequirao, Sacsayhuamán, Tipón, Pisac and Ollantaytambo, just to name a few.

People interested in religious landmarks, who will find the city is full of them, as are the surrounding country villages (Andahuaylillas, Huaru).

Popular tradition buffs, who can attend such festivals as the Inti Raymi and the Qoyllur Rit'i.

Experiential tourism aficionados, who, at Raqchi, can share in the daily labors of the farmers there.

Birdwatchers, who should not pass on the journey to Huacarpay Lagoon and the Málaga Pass.

Adventure sports lovers, who can river-raft, mountain bike, paraglide and do many other adrenaline pumping activities at spots located in and around Cusco.

Handicraft collectors, who must visit the San Blas quarter in Cusco and check out the Sunday flea markets at Chinchero and Pisac.

h. Danza y música en honor de la Virgen del Carmen, en Paucartambo.
i. Compruebe por sí mismo por qué Machu Picchu es una maravilla.
j. El Valle Sagrado, lugar moldeado por manos divinas.
k. Viaje en el tiempo y conozca la grandeza de la cultura inca.





Places to visit and celebration dates

WHERE?

In Cusco:

- **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.
- **The Cathedral.** Built in the 16th century, this landmark is really three churches in one as well as a depository of valuable masterpieces – more than 1200 are on display -, ranging from gold leafed altars, a wood carved choir and a painting with an interesting interpretation of the Last Supper, where the artist included, among the food served, a Guinea pig, which is traditional meal of Cusco.
- **Church of Our Lady of Mercy.** This church is headquarters of the Order of Mercy (Mercedarians) in Peru. It is an excellent example of architecture coming out of the time when Peru was a Spanish viceroyalty. On its interior walls hang flawlessly restored paintings from the Cusco School.

Yet, the highlight of it all is the pure-gold custody, studded with diamonds, rubies, pearls and other gemstones, which is said to be a replica of the one in the Cathedral of Toledo, Spain.

- **Church of the Company of Jesus.** A Jesuit church, located to one side of the Main Square. Inside are priceless works of art, delicate wood religious statues and uncommon places tucked away in corners of the building, like its underground chapel dedicated to praying for the dead, its sacristy and its aerial corridors that reach to the central cupola.

- **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.

- **San Blas, quarter and church.** A charming section of town where Cusco's artisans live and work. It used to be known as the Incan quarter of T'ooqokachi. Visit the church there to see a nice collection of paintings.

- **Archbishop Palace and the 12-angle stone.** Built during the Colony on the palace foundations of one of the Incan Emperors, Inca Roca, and exhibiting definite Arabic influences, it is currently site of the Museum of Religious Art.

- **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.

- **Larco Museum of Pre-Columbian Art.** Another nice collection (450 works of art) are on display here, done between 1250 B.C. and 1532 A.D.

- **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, and 3) Tambomachay, which some historians hypothesize that might have been a place for water worship and earth regeneration.

Sacred Valley of the Incas:

- **Pisac.** Go to this village to experience its handicraft market

as well as to see ancient Incan constructions: an irrigation system, an observatory, an Intiwatana (stone used as a calendar, taking into account the position of the sun), and agricultural terraces.

- **Calca.** This town is placed at the skirts of two huge mountains: Pituisiray and Sawasiray, and in and around it sit different attractions: Huchu'y Qosqo or “Small Cusco” archeological complex and two sets of springs: Machacancha (heated sulfurous waters) and Minasmoqo (cold bubbling mineral waters).
- **Yucay.** This community has historically been seen as a very important center for irrigation technology and farming. Built here long ago was a palace for Manco Saryi Túpac, which according to legend was first owned by the Incan Emperor Huayna Cápac.

- **Urubamba.** This town is in the heart of the Sacred Valley. Before the Conquest, it was an extremely important agricultural center and still today, farming forms part of its economic base, along with tourism.

- **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 a 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

What to buy?

Cusco is a handicraft lover's dream come true, with so much to choose from that it will be hard to say no to any of them, starting with handmade clothing, pottery pieces, silver jewelry, copies of paintings from the Cusco School, wood carved statues decorated in gold leaf, religious figurines (the Three Kings, the Virgin Mary, Baby Jesus and archangels), masks, etc. The San Blas quarter is traditionally where you will find most of Cusco's famous artisans' workshops, the likes of Edilberto Mérida, Antonio Olave, Jesús La Torre and the Mendivil family.

What to eat?

Since visitors from all over the world come to Cusco, food to satisfy all tastes and budgets is served there. You can find restaurants that serve traditional southern Andean dishes, like qapchi (potato and cheese salad) or lawa (a vegetable-beef soup) as well as those featuring alpaca meat (prized for its tenderness and low cholesterol), and restaurants that are increasingly providing specialties from the Novo-Andean style, which has prided itself on using rediscovered Andean produce, like quinoa (a grain) and aguaymanto (type of berry), in modern cooking techniques. There are plenty of Italian restaurants and other, international ones. Yet, you should try one of the traditional country restaurants that offer a varied menu without losing the taste of a good home cooked meal.

*l. Sobre los cimientos incas se construyó un grandioso legado colonial.
m. Amanecer en el Valle Sagrado.
n. Cusco, una ciudad de encanto y misterio.
o. Sabiduría que pasa de generación en generación.
p. Una cuidada que lo transportará en el tiempo.*



Special recommendations

Seeing that you are in the Andes, it will be necessary to acclimate yourself. Take it easy the first day, eat light food and drink what the natives drink to keep from feeling the affects of soroche or altitude sickness – mate de coca (coca tea). During the rainy season, bring a waterproof jacket, but during the dry season, wear a hat and use plenty of sun block. When traveling in the Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu, please follow the posted rules that will help in preserving its natural and cultural beauty.

