

Explore History in Peru: A Treasure Trove of Archeological Gems

When thinking about Peru, for many travelers Machu Picchu is the first thing that springs to mind. While the most famous site in South America is indeed a highlight of many trips, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Peru has an abundance of historical sites that are equally interesting and impressive—and often less crowded. Peru historical sites are some of the most fascinating in South America. Ruins of ancient civilizations are scattered throughout the country and archeological sites are still being discovered. It's a treasure trove of archeological gems.

What makes Peru a great destination for history lovers?

Peru's history spans four millennia, during which the country has been home to various highly developed ancient civilizations. The Inca civilization is the most famous one and left a distinct mark on the country. But long before that, the country was home to far more ancient civilizations, including the Norte Chico civilization, which is considered the oldest civilization in the Americas. The stories of these ancient civilizations are told through the ruins that dot the country, the artifacts found at archeological sites, and the mysterious drawings and symbols that decorate them.

The best historical sites in Peru to visit

These are some of the best and perhaps most underrated historical sites in Peru besides Machu Picchu, for those looking for a different kind of adventure.

A glimpse of life during pre-Columbian times at Chan Chan

Once the grand capital of the Chimu civilization, Chan Chan is now the largest adobe city in the world. The remains of the city provide a fascinating insight into the Chimu culture and belief system, represented through the intricate carvings on the adobe walls.

Caral: the most ancient site in Peru

Caral was inhabited by the Norte Chico civilization between 2,600 and 2,000 B.C., making this the oldest historical site in Peru. The site consists of 19 pyramid structures that provide evidence of the earliest developments of social and cultural life in Peru.

Discover the other 'lost city': Choquequirao

Sometimes referred to as "the other Machu Picchu", Choquequirao originates from the same time period and is equally grand. The ancient Inca city was only discovered as late as the 1970s and at present just one third has been excavated from the encroaching jungle.

Kuelap: where the Amazon meets the Andes

Kuelap, a fortified citadel located at 3,000 meters above sea level, was originally inhabited by the Chachapoya, also known as the Cloud People or Warriors of the Clouds. The location high up in the mountains brought them closer to the Gods—and makes for spectacular views.

Visit elegant Cajamarca and the 'ventanillas'

While the city of Cajamarca is known for its beautiful center with stunning Baroque buildings, the surroundings of the city are home to various 'ventanillas'. These necropolises, consisting of niches carved into cliffs, retain tombs dating back to 800 A.D.

Tips for planning a historical tour of Peru

If you want to have a good understanding of the meaning and significance of the historical sites you're visiting, hiring a local guide is highly recommended. Unless you have a good understanding of Spanish, it's essential to look for an English-speaking guide. [REDACTED] can help you find local English-speaking guides to provide you with inside information and on-site assistance.