

The Amazing North of Peru



...and the Lost
World of the

Chachapoyas

PERU

The Amazing North



Introduction

The spectacular North of Peru is rich in archaeology, history and scenic contrasts. Bounded by the cold waters of the world's most plentiful fishing grounds and the Amazon rainforest, lie the stark deserts, fertile valleys, mountains and cloud forests that gave birth to several great pre-Inca civilizations. From the 1st to the 15th Century AD the most prominent of these cultures - Moche, Lambayeque, Chimu and Chachapoyas - achieved great sophistication and skill in ceramics, agriculture, architecture, metallurgy and warfare. Their vast and mysterious citadels, tombs and temples grace the outskirts of some of the principal cities of the north - Chiclayo, Trujillo and Chachapoyas.

Frieze from Temple of the Moon



Detail of Chan Chan Palaces

The Coast

The Northern Coast's civilizations left us astonishing evidence of their achievements. Tucume, the "Valley of 26 Pyramids", was a thriving city of temples and squares built by the Lambayeque in the 11th Century and conquered by the Chimu in the 14th. The exquisitely decorated Moche Temples of the Sun and the Moon stand a few miles from the Pacific Ocean, near the 500-acre complex of Chan Chan, capital of the Chimu Empire and one of the largest and most developed cities in the ancient Americas. The Moche tomb of Sipan - the richest burial site discovered in the Western Hemisphere (October 1988 - National Geographic) is a few miles east of the modern city of Chiclayo. Finely crafted gold artifacts and ceramics recovered from these complexes are on display at the Museum of the Royal Tombs - one of the finest in South America as well as at the Museum of Sipan.

The region's shamans, direct descendants of these lost civilizations, are famous throughout Peru for their healing skills and wisdom, and can be visited by travelers. Nature lovers may explore the unique dry forest of Chaparri and the Spectacled Bear reintroduction project. Birdwatchers enjoy spotting the region's 40 unique (endemic) bird species, including the emblematic Marvelous Spatuletail Hummingbird. Travelers may also visit traditional haciendas that breed and show Peru's world famous "Paso Fino" horses.



Reconstruction of the Lord of Sipan

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The Interior

Chachapoyas, which means "People of the Clouds", is the name of a civilization that fought from high forest strongholds in resistance to Inca expansion and Spanish invasion. One of the last kingdoms to succumb to the Inca, its legacy includes one of South America's archaeological wonders - the defensive fortress of Kuelap. Perched on the shoulder of a 10,000-foot mountain, this 9th Century citadel comprises an urban complex of more than 400 stone edifices - homes, palaces and temples enclosed by a 70-foot-tall stone wall. Their architecture demonstrates decidedly non-Inca features, such as protruding geometric patterns, cornices, and friezes. Kuelap's setting is unforgettably beautiful - a tropical cloud forest festooned with orchids and steeped in mystery.

The Revash Tombs, the Karajia Sarcophagi and the extensive network of Chachapoya paved trails also serve as a reminder of the greatness of this vanished nation. Archaeologists just now are mapping and excavating many important Chachapoya sites. The museum in Leymebamba, which displays 200 mummies recovered from the remote Lake of the Condors, describes the extraordinary embalming methods of the Chachapoya, their lifestyle and culture. The Museum also houses a collection of knotted Quipu, the record-keeping device of the Incas.



Cajamarca is a city of colonial charm, rolling Andean countryside, and home to the important archaeological sites of Ventanillas de Otuzco and Cumbemayo. It is a place of great historical significance - in this city Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro captured, imprisoned, ransomed, and executed Inca Emperor Atahualpa, unleashing the destruction of Inca civilization. Travelers may stroll in the town square - site of the first and decisive battle between the Spanish and the Inca - and visit the ransom rooms that were filled with gold and silver by legions of loyal Inca subjects in the attempt to buy the freedom of their doomed regent.



The Wall of the Fortress of Kuelap



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Tour Programs

InkaNatura Travel is the most versatile, full-service travel agency in Peru. With offices in Lima, Cusco, Puerto Maldonado, and Chiclayo, InkaNatura is ready to serve your clients. Northern Peru is just one site in our extensive, country-wide portfolio of wildlife and archaeological destinations.

The Moche Route (3 days/2 nights)

Explore and enjoy the amazing archaeological sites and diverse cultures of the north coast. With one night in Chiclayo and one in Trujillo, this itinerary includes visits to Tucume, the Sipan archaeological site, and the Museum of the Royal Tombs. Between Chiclayo and Trujillo we stop in Paijan to enjoy a colorful show by world-famous Peruvian "Paso Fino" horses. Near Trujillo we visit Chan Chan (the 500-acre complex of pre-Columbian royal palaces) and the majestic Moche Temples of the Sun and the Moon.

Chachapoyas Discoverer (5 days/4 nights)

Classic five-day fixed departure to the lost kingdom of the Chachapoyas features visits to the stunning Kuelap Citadel, the Revash Tombs, the Macro Towers and the spectacular Leymebamba Museum with its mysterious mummies. Includes short treks on foot and horseback, and all meals and accommodation at the charming El Chillo Lodge. A shorter program is also available.

Chachapoyas Explorer (7 days/6 nights,)

A program for travelers with a profound interest in archaeology and adventure. We visit the Kuelap Fortress, Revash, the Macro Towers, the Leymebamba Museum, traditional Andean towns, La Congona archaeological site, Ventanillas de Otuzco, and in Cajamarca the Inca Baths and Ransom Room of Atahualpa. Includes half-day treks on foot and on horseback, and all meals and accommodation at the following sites: El Chillo Lodge (4 nights), a rustic hostel in Celendin (1 night), and the Laguna Seca Hotel (1 night). Fixed departures.



The Main Square of Cajamarca

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What we include

Contact us for prices, detailed itineraries, pre-departure information, and other suggestions on how to make your adventure the trip of a lifetime. Private departures available and trekking programs to the Lake of the Condors can be arranged.

Please note that all Chachapoyas programs require a reasonable degree of physical fitness.

Our trips include:

- * Expert, bilingual guides.
- * Comfortable ground transportation during the entire program.
- * Maps, bibliography, and entrance fees to archaeological sites.
- * Meals as specified on the itinerary.
- * Accommodations and meals at the best hotels and restaurants along the route.



Mysterious sarcophagi at Karajia



Mummy from Lake of the Condors



Golden "peanut" necklace from Sipan



Moche Reed-boat figurine

The leader in archaeology and nature

InkaNatura Travel is the leading service provider in the North of Peru, an area rich in archaeology and nature. A visit to northern Peru, combined with our superb Inca Trail and Machu Picchu departures is an archaeological tour de force.

In addition, we operate several outstanding rainforest lodges that complement the archaeological experience with the "most intense wildlife experience in the Amazon" (Condé Nast Traveler Magazine, Dec 2002). Manu Wildlife Center – a favorite of wildlife documentary film producers - is accessible via a short flight from Cusco and features the world's most visited Macaw Clay Lick, the world's largest Tapir Clay Lick, Giant Otters, wildlife-rich Amazon lakes, rainforest canopy platforms and much more.

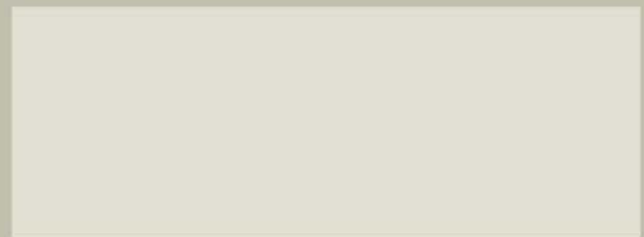
InkaNatura Travel also has custom-designed logistical services for over 30 TV documentaries, notably for the BBC, Discovery Channel, National Geographic, and many other broadcasters.



More Information:

- Video : "Lost Warriors of the Clouds", Discovery Channel, 1999.
- Article : "Quest for the Lost Tombs of the Peruvian Cloud People" by Peter Lerche, National Geographic Magazine, September, 2000.
- Book : "Warriors of the Clouds: A Lost Civilization in the Upper Amazon of Peru" by Keith Muscutt, University of New Mexico Press, 1998.
- Book : "The Incas and their Ancestors: The Archaeology of Peru" by Michael E Moseley, Revised edition, Thames & Hudson, 2001.
- Book : "The Moche", by Garth Bawden, University of New Mexico Press, 1999.
- Book : "Royal Tombs of Sipán", by Walter Alva and Christopher Donnan, University of California Press, 2000.
- Book : "Moche Portraits from Ancient Peru" by Christopher Donnan, University of Texas Press, 2003.

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