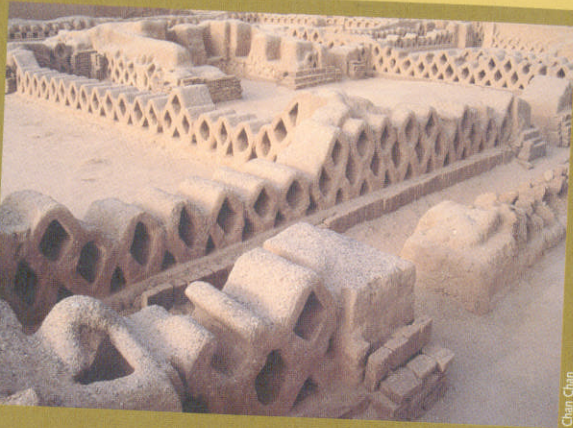


CHAN CHAN

the mud metropolis



Archivo de PromPerú

Chan Chan

Chan Chan lies in the Moche Valley, 5 km (3 miles) northwest of the city of Trujillo. The largest mud-brick citadel built by a pre-Hispanic civilization in the Americas, Chan Chan (which means Sun-Sun) was the religious and administrative capital of the Chimu kingdom until the conquest by the Incas. UNESCO listed it as a World Cultural Heritage in 1986.

The archaeological site covers an area of 20 square kilometers (7.7 square miles) that once had an estimated population of 100,000 -- three types of buildings show there was housing for several different social classes, from low-income and intermediate levels to the palaces where the lords Chimu-Capac lived.

The citadel was built between the 12th and 15th centuries, comprised of nine walled structures between some 200 meters to 400 meters long (1,312 feet), made up of flat-topped pyramids, squares, houses, storages, factories and a labyrinthine network of streets.

One of Chan Chan's features are its towering, thick walls that are heavily-decorated with haute-relief geometric, animal and mythological figures.

A number of well-known archaeologists and scientists have carried out research in the area, including the Swiss national Juan Diego De Tschudi, after whom one of the sections in the complex is named.

Finds indicate that the Grand Chimu kingdom reached a peak in which its people developed sophisticated architecture and agriculture to overcome the desert, and expressed their arts through creative pottery and metallurgy, including exquisitely delicate filigree, for which they are known as the finest jeweledsmiths of ancient Peru.

Today, the archaeological complex has a site museum and tourist facilities.



C. Sala / PromPerú

Chan Chan wall

AYACUCHO

the city of churches



Revista Bienvenida

Holly week Ayacucho

The city of Ayacucho (2,746 meters / 9,006 feet), capital of the region of Ayacucho, is in the southern area of the Andes. There was the capital of the first Andean empire, Wari, which reached its peak towards the 6th century. The Incas dominated this region in 1438, and the Spanish conquistadors founded the Christian city in 1539.

Although there are a number of archaeological remains, the city of Ayacucho is best known for its beautiful colonial architecture represented in over 30 churches, each with richly decorated altars. The main churches include the Cathedral (1612); Jesuit church of the Compañía (17th century); San Cristobal (1540), which is the oldest; San Francisco de Asis (1552); church and convent of Santa Clara (1568) and Santo Domingo (1548)

The colonial homes have large patios, elaborate stone doorways and walls with animal motifs, mainly pumas and serpents. The most important houses are the Casona Vivanco (17th century); Casona Ruiz de Ochoa (17th century); Casona Boza y Solis (1740); and Casona de Castilla y Zamora (1677).

On the plains of Quinua, the Battle of Ayacucho was fought on December 9, 1824 as the final seal to the independence of South America.

Besides its attractive buildings and beautiful countryside, Ayacucho is known as the Capital of Peruvian Arts and Crafts for the number of families of artisans that have continued generation after generation to craft unique pieces --such as the delicate retablos, full of tiny carved figures--using ancient techniques. Its folk music and dancing are also popular, including the famous Scissors Dance.



W. Wuest / PromPerú

Ayacucho carnival