

CAJAMARCA

the spa of the Incas



Revista Bierremenda

Inca's hot spring

Cajamarca (2,720 meters / 8,922 feet), is held to be the most important city in Peru's northern highlands. It was the place of origin for the pre-Inca culture of Cajamarca –which includes the famous Windows of Otuzco – and was a great administrative and relaxation center for the sovereign during the Inca empire. It was here in 1532 that the future of the empire was decided, when the Inca Atahualpa was visiting the hot springs of what is known today as the Inca Baths or Baños del Inca. The Spanish imprisoned the Inca in Cajamarca and later executed him there.

Besides the Inca Baths nearby, and its waters that feature a wide variety of minerals with healing properties, the city has a variety of archaeological buildings that include the Ransom Room, where Atahualpa was held prisoner; beautiful colonial architecture, seen in the Cathedral and in the San Francisco church; and a rich variety of folk arts. Cajamarca is called Peru's carnival capital.

Many of the tourist attractions are only a few minutes away by road from the city. To the south (30 minutes) lies the picturesque village of Llacanora, and there are hikes to Granja Porcon, a farm with agro-tourism programs and a unique arts and crafts tradition.

To the southwest (40 minutes) is the archaeological site of Cumbemayo, of Chavin origin. In the province of San Pablo (3 hours), lies Kunturhuasi, one of the most important ceremonial center from pre-Inca times.

The Cutervo National Park includes orchids and different palms, and endangered species of wildlife (guacharos, cock-of-the-rocks, and spectacled bears).



Combayo funeral niches

C. Sala / PromPeru

TUCUME

the valley of the pyramids



M. D'Aurial

tucume pyramid valley

On the north coast, 33km/20 miles north of the city of Chiclayo, lies the Valley of the Pyramids of Tucume, an architectural complex made up of 26 adobe pyramids or 'huacas' (temples) almost 40 meters/130 feet tall. They are spread out over 220 hectares/543 acres.

Studies show that the first pyramids were built around A.D.700, as the center of the fledgling Lambayeque culture. The center later became very important as regional power spread under the successive rule of the Chimú (1375- 1470) and the Incas (1470 – 1532).

The structures are from different periods and show that they were used for a number of political, administrative, social and religious purposes. They include temples, storage rooms, living quarters and areas with walls decorated in relief.

The most outstanding pyramid is Huaca Larga, the largest in South America, that measures approximately 700 meters in length (2,296 feet), 280 meters thick (918 feet) and 30 meters high (98 feet).

In 1988, scientific research began at Tucume through an agreement between the Brunning Archaeological Museum of Lambayeque and the Kon-Tiki Museum of Oslo. The Kon-Tiki expedition, led by Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl in 1947, discovered possible ancient routes by sailing across the Pacific between Callao in Peru and the islands of Polynesia.

Other attractions are: the Site Museum, is built in the same style as the ancient structures; Pomac Forest Historic Sanctuary, southeast of Chiclayo, which covers an expanse of invaluable dry forests and the archaeological zone of Batán Grande where the tomb of the Lord of Sicán was found (Sicán means House of the Moon in the ancient Muchik language).



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Frieze of the site museum of Tucume