

## PERU INFO

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### PRE INCAS

The first inhabitants of Peru were nomadic hunter-gatherers who lived in caves in Peru's coastal regions. The oldest site, Pikimachay cave, dates from 12,000 BC. Crops such as cotton, beans, squash and peppers were planted around 4000 BC; later, advanced cultures such as the Chavín introduced weaving, agriculture and religion to the country. Around 300 BC, the Chavín inexplicably disappeared, but over the centuries several other cultures - including the Salinar, Nazca, Paracas Necropolis and Wari (Huari) - became locally important.

### THE INCAS

By the early 15th century, the Inca Empire had control of much of the area, extending its influence from Ecuador to Chile. The most startling feature of the great Inca Empire was its brevity. In 1430, the realm of the Inca consisted of little more than the river valley around Cuzco. Less than a century later, through conquest and a canny policy of incorporating the best features of the societies they subjugated, the Incas controlled a vast territory of almost 1 million square kilometers--a dominion that extended from northwest Argentina to southern Colombia. The Incan capital, at Qosqo, was undoubtedly the richest city in all of the Americas, with temples literally sheathed in heavy gold plate. Although Qosqo's architecture remains only in fragments and foundations, the architectural accomplishment of the Inca's has survived intact at the astounding ceremonial centre of Machu Picchu.

### CONQUER

In 1532, at the height of its power, the Inca empire was driven by a war of succession. In one of the great tragedies of history, it was at precisely this moment that Francisco Pizarro and his band of Spanish conquistadors arrived on the scene. Showing an uncanny ability to turn circumstances to his own advantage, Pizarro used deception and guile to gain a personal meeting with Atahualpa, the Inca ruler, whom he coolly assassinated. In the face of fierce resistance, Pizarro and his men seized Cuzco and sacked the city. Although the Incas continued to fight for the next several years, their empire had ended and Spanish rule had begun.

This was the era of the great campaigns of evangelization and doctrinisation which in the end made Peru an authentic Spanish colony. There were several rebellions, with the biggest led by the Indian chief Tupac Amaru II, who brought together people of all races and social classes against the Spanish crown. However, he was finally defeated. Given the crisis within the Vice Regency, one social class, especially the criollos (the children of the Spanish, born in Peru), were the principal managers of the future Independence of Peru.

### REPUBLIC

This period began in 1821, with the Declaration of Independence in the city of Lima under the power of the Argentinean José de San Martín. He had united with the Venezuelan Simon Bolivar, and

together they had directed military campaigns, made up by the army and different regions of the Vice Regency. However, two further battles, in Ayacucho y Junín, were necessary in 1824 to seal the Independence of Peru. Following the liberty from Spain, the problem most difficult for the young republics was political organization and creating consensus between the recently formed social groups. How could Peru develop in an independent manner? What group should manage this development? Which group would be the most capable to govern Peru? These were the great questions from the beginning of the Republic, and the lack of resolution brought the country its' biggest problems. From the first wars between the military leaders to the struggles between the political organizations of recent years, Peru still seems to have not found an appropriate formula to reach its' goals.