

WRITTEN by LAUREN HUNSBERGER

FINDING Peace in PERU

A stunning combination of mountains, city, jungle, history and adventure, Peru has everything you need for the perfect combination of wellness and thrill-seeking.



TOUCH DOWN IN CUSCO

The best base camp for a Peruvian adventure is Cusco, the capital of the Inca Empire more than 600 years ago. There are few direct flights into Cusco, so you will likely have to fly to Lima first, but the layover is well worth it. As you eventually fly directly through the craggy, lush peaks of the Andes Mountains, you will get a bird's-eye view of all the potential for grand experiences that await you.

But beware: the most important thing to know about Cusco, and many of the most popular destinations in Peru, is that it sits at 10,800 feet above sea level, which is no joke. You will want to spend a few days acclimatizing in the city before venturing out farther into the mountains, and come prepared with healing aids if you know you are prone to altitude sickness. Locals suggest chewing coca leaves (which you can purchase virtually everywhere in town) and sipping coca or mate tea to help ease upset stomachs and soothe headaches.

BOOK A ROOM AT INKATERRA LA CASONA

Inkaterra La Casona is the premier place to stay in Cusco, as the city's first five-star boutique hotel. It's located in the beautiful Plaza de las Nazarenas, surrounded by vibrant eateries, shops and historic places to visit. The service here is top-notch, and the staff greets guests with tummy-soothing tea and a traditional Incan gift. But it's the history of this stunning hotel that really impresses.

"This sixteenth-century manor house stands on the training grounds for an elite army of Incas, and had Spanish conquistador Diego de Almagro and Libertador Simón Bolívar among its illustrious guests," according to the website.

There are only 11 suites on the property, and each one is perfectly appointed with a mix of traditional details and artwork while offering all the modern amenities, including floor-to-ceiling marble showers, Wi-Fi and luxurious bedding.

LED BY A SHAMAN,
THE CEREMONY
INVOLVES MAKING AN
OFFERING OF SMALL
AMOUNTS OF NATIVE
ANDEAN CEREALS,
GRAINS AND FRUITS,
TOGETHER WITH
COCA LEAVES



REFRESH AND RESTORE ON THE PROPERTY

Set in a stunning dining room with glass doors that face ancient art and lush Peruvian vegetation, the in-house restaurant on Inkaterra La Casona's property is a must. "The food is fresh, natural and nutritious; our chefs incorporate local ingredients to give travelers a portal to explore and discover the indigenous culinary secrets." Their menu rotates based on the season, so ask your server what the chef recommends. The restaurant can also pack lunch boxes for any of your one-day excursions.

For something truly special, ask about their signature services including secret tea time on the roof of a nearby cathedral, sunset cocktail or even a Pay the Earth Ceremony Pachamama. "Led by a shaman, the ceremony involves making an offering of small amounts of native Andean cereals, grains and fruits, together with coca leaves." It's a taste of the mystical tradition of the indigenous people.

Lastly, be sure to relax in the Yacu Spa Therapy Room. "All of our spa products are 100 percent natural, derived from local botanical extracts for a pleasing, spiritual and soothing experience." The spa offers a variety of massages, foot therapy, reflexology and oxygen therapy.

→ For more information, please visit inkaterra.com.



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INKATERRA LA CASONA



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