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Food, Travel and Lifestyle for Grownups

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## Hotel Inkaterra La Casona, Cusco, Peru

Rupert Parker enjoys luxury colonial style in Cusco.



Inkaterra La Casona Courtyard

The first 5 star boutique hotel in Cusco and a member of Relais & Chateau, Inkaterra La Casona is located in the traditional Plaza de las Nazarenas, surrounded by narrow cobblestoned streets. This 16th colonial palace stands on the training ground for an elite army of Incas, and ranks Spanish Conquistador Diego de Almagro and 'Libertador' Simón Bolívar among its illustrious guests.

After five years of painstaking restoration, staying faithful to its original architecture, Inkaterra La Casona proudly reflects the encounter of cultures and traditions across centuries. Today it's a national historic monument and contains just 11 suites around a grassy arcaded cloister. The halls are decorated with colonial furniture, Pre-Columbian textiles and original murals, providing a timeless texture to the building.

There are just 11 sumptuous suites, called Balcon, Patio and Plaza, all opening onto the enclosed courtyard. We stayed in a stylish Balcon Suite located on the upper floor with views of the Plaza outside. Wooden shutters ensured any outside noise was minimum and underfloor heating kept us warm. A comfortable King size bed with 100% pima cotton sheets, down duvet plus four anti-allergenic pillows ensured a good night's sleep.

Furnishings are traditional, there's a dining area for two and a stone fireplace. The large marble bathroom contained two sinks, large bath tub, separate shower and toilet, plus Inkaterra's handmade toiletries, plush towels and a twin closet. Complimentary bottled water, gowns, slippers are all standard and there's TV, DVD and iPod speakers. Even better, the evening turndown service supplied a hot water bottle to keep us cosy.

On the ground floor the hotel's restaurant serves breakfast both buffet style and a-la-carte. Food is fresh, natural and nutritious, making creative use of local ingredients, and explores indigenous culinary styles. The bar serves national and international liquors and spirits and there's complimentary afternoon tea with homemade cakes and a range of hot beverages.

The Yacu Therapy Room is a serene escape to indulge in revitalizing treatments. They use Inkaterra's 100% natural spa products derived from local botanical extracts to ensure the ultimate relaxing, spiritual and soothing experience. They say that the alkaloids contained in Coca leaves activate skin

cellular activity, circulation and help the body to eliminate fatty tissue. Signature treatments include Foot Therapy, Reflexology, Exfoliation, Andean Hot Stones, De-Stress Massage and Oxygen Therapy.

Cusco's Plaza d'Armas is a few minutes' walk away with the Cathedral containing 11 chapels, 1 vestry, 7 altarpieces and more than 300 paintings. Nearby is the Church of Santo Domingo, built on the ruined foundations of the temple of the sun, incorporating Inca stonework into the structure. A short walk is the historic neighbourhood of San Blas with its colourful colonial buildings surrounding the church.

The hotel organises guided tours to nearby ruins including the fortress of Sacsayhuamán, Pucará, or "red fort;" thought to be a hunting lodge, Qenko, which means "zigzag" in Quechua and Tambomachay, a site for ritual bathing. Further afield is the Sacred Valley and the crown jewel of Machu Picchu.

If you want to soak up the historic atmosphere of the Conquistadores, then a stay at La Casona fits the bill. With just a handful of spacious suites, the hotel feels like a destination in its own right. However don't let that stop you exploring the vibrant city outside.

## Factbox

Prices at Inkaterra La Casona start from \$440 for two, including breakfast.

[Inkaterra La Casona \(https://www.inkaterra.com/inkaterra/inkaterra-la-casona/the-experience/\)](https://www.inkaterra.com/inkaterra/inkaterra-la-casona/the-experience/)

Plaza Nazarenas 211,

Cusco 08002, Peru

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