

TIME TRAVEL GUIDES

THE INCA EMPIRE

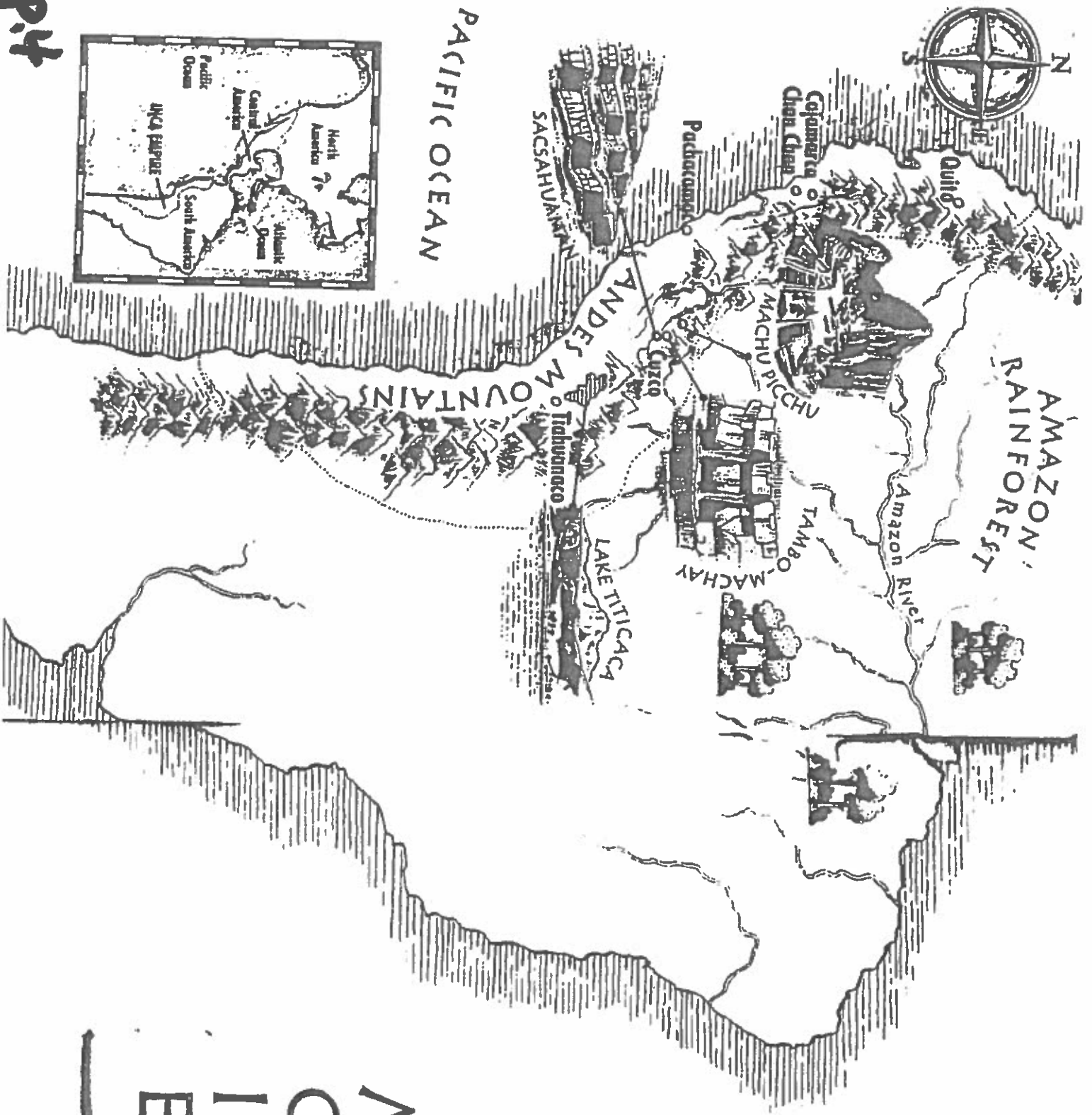
CONTENTS

Map of the Inca Empire	4
Facts about the Inca Empire	7
Cuzco and Machu Picchu	23
Travel, Food, and Shelter	29
Things to See and Do	37
Souvenir Hunting	45
Health and Safety	49
Inca Empire Facts and Figures	55
Further Reading	61
Glossary	62
Index	64

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Words that appear in the text in bold, like this, are explained in the Glossary.



MAP
OF THE
INCA
EMPIRE

WHEN TO TRAVEL

If you want to visit the Inca Empire, you only have 100 years in which to make your trip. Around 1430 the Incas settled in the city of Cuzco. Between 1438 and 1463, the Inca ruler Pachacuti built up a powerful city-state with Cuzco at its heart. Over the next 10 years, Pachacuti and his son Topa Inca conquered the Chimu people in the north. And by 1493, Topa Inca had tripled the size of his empire, taking over vast stretches of land to the south.

Between 1438 and 1493, the Inca army fought many fierce battles —so if you visit then, you'll need to stay away from areas of conflict. However, you'll find most people are busy working as farmers, fishers, traders, and craftworkers.

PEAK TIME

To catch the Inca Empire at its height, visit between 1493 and 1525. At this time Huayna Capac ruled the empire, and under him it reached its greatest size. If you visit at this time, you'll find a well-run empire, with thriving cities and towns linked by a



This is an 18th-century painting of the emperor Atahualpa. His reign ended in tragedy for the Incas.

KEEP AWAY!

After 1525 the Inca Empire should be avoided. By then, the empire was divided by a bloody civil war as the sons of Huayna Capac fought each other for power. Then, in 1532, an expedition of Spanish conquistadors, led by Francisco Pizarro, arrived in Peru. Pizarro captured the Inca Emperor Atahualpa and later put him to death.

In 1572 the last Inca ruler was executed, and Spain seized all the Inca lands. During this period you'll see the Spaniards treating the Incas cruelly. You'll also be at risk for smallpox, measles, and influenza, all brought from Europe by Spanish soldiers.

GOOD AND BAD TIMES

- 1200–1300 The Incas settle in the Cuzco valley
- 1300–1400 The city of Cuzco grows
- 1438–63 Pachacuti Inca gains land around Cuzco
- 1463–71 Pachacuti and Topa Inca conquer the Chimu lands in the north
- 1471–93 Topa Inca conquers the southern part of the empire
- 1493–1525 Huayna Capac rules the empire and conquers more lands
- 1525–32 Civil war between the sons of Huayna Capac
- 1532–72 Francisco Pizarro and his Spanish army gradually take over the Inca Empire; smallpox, measles, and influenza kill millions; the Incas also suffer from famine

Key:

- Stay away
- Visit with caution
- Best time to visit

WHO WERE THE INCAS?

The name *Inca* actually only refers to the people who live in Cuzco. All the other people in the empire belong to different tribes or nations. They are often known as the Andean people because they live in the Andes region.

OTHER TIMES TO AVOID

Before you set off for the Inca Empire, check for droughts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and the rainy season (from March to December). However, if you happen to arrive at a bad time, the Incas will be well prepared. All over the empire there are storerooms filled with food and clothing in case of emergency.

WHO'S WHO IN THE INCA EMPIRE?

Before you head off to South America, it is a good idea to find out exactly who does what in the Inca Empire. Inca society is divided into strict social classes, so you'll need to know exactly how to treat the different kinds of people you meet.

SAPAS

At the very top of Inca society is the emperor, known as the Sapa Inca. The Incas believe that he is the son of the sun, and they treat him like a god. The Sapa Inca doesn't feed or dress himself, and instead of walking he is usually carried around in a litter (a throne held up by several servants). People entering the emperor's presence have to take off their shoes and carry a load on their back to show that they are humble before him.

Everyone in the empire is expected to respect the Sapa Inca and worship him like a god. To make sure all his people stay loyal to him, the emperor makes many journeys throughout his lands. He is carried in a litter along the Inca roads, accompanied by a grand procession (see page 31). Everywhere the Sapa Inca goes, crowds of people gather to worship him.

The Sapa Inca wears colorful embroidered robes and a special headdress with red fringe and golden tassels. But whatever you do, don't be tempted to stare at him. Anyone who dares to look the emperor in the face is instantly put to death!

GIRLS BEWARE!

Girls should stay far away from the Sapa Inca. Whenever the Sapa Inca travels, he keeps an eye out for girls to marry. If you are chosen to be one of his wives, you must obey or be put to death.

COYAS

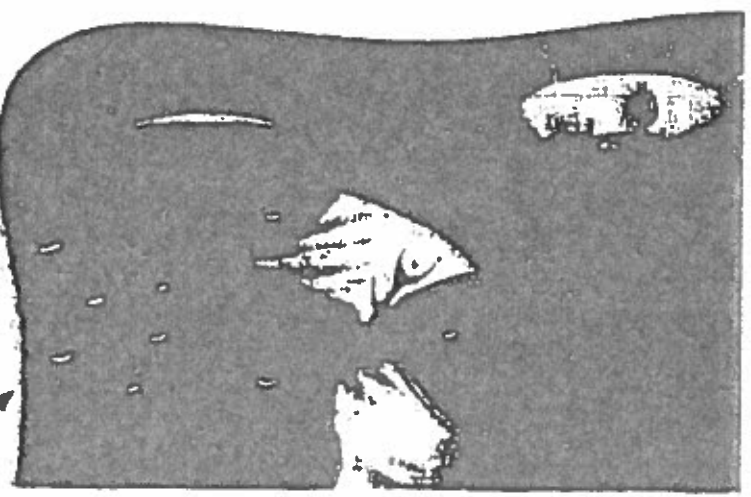
The Sapa Inca has hundreds of wives, but his most important wife is his sister. She is called the Coya Inca and she is believed to be the daughter of the moon. By marrying his sister, the Sapa Inca believes that his children will have the pure blood of the sun. This is important because one of his sons will be the next emperor.

NOBLES AND COMMONERS

All the emperor's children automatically become nobles. Some nobles work as priests, judges, or army officers. Others are officials in the different regions of the empire.

It's easy to spot nobles by their dress. They have large gold earplugs (see page 18) and tunics made from very fine woven cloth. For special occasions, such as festivals, nobles wear tall, feathered headdresses. They also have golden medallions on their chests and heels, and cloaks made from glittering plates of silver and gold.

The ordinary people work as farmers, laborers, and craftworkers. They have to work very hard and obey all the orders of the nobles. These hard-working people have a strong sense of community. They live in large family groups called *ayllus*, and all the members of an *ayllu* share the family's tasks. The *ayllu* is led by a group of elders who decide the rules for their community.



This 18th-century painting shows the first ever Coya, Mama Occllo.

HOW THE INCA EMPIRE IS RUN

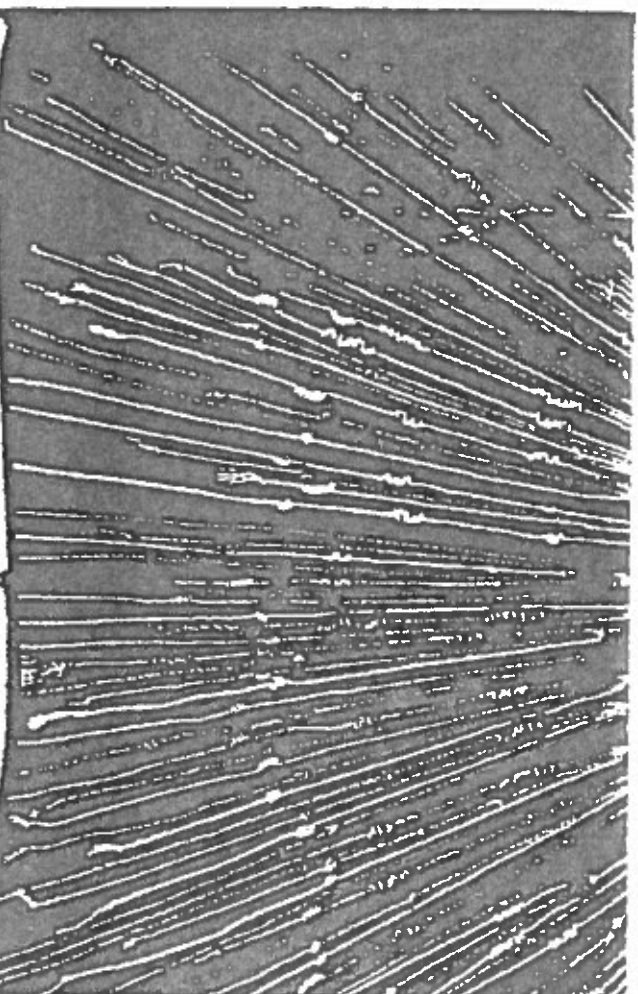
The Inca Empire is very well run. Some people even think it compares with the Roman Empire. The Inca Empire is divided into four quarters, and each quarter has its own governor. These four governors hold regular meetings with the Sapa Inca and carry out his orders. Under the governors are hundreds of local officials. Their job is to make sure that everyone obeys the emperor's orders and that people do their duty of service to the empire.

SERVING THE EMPIRE

All the men in the Inca lands have to spend part of every year working for the empire. Many Incas serve the empire by working in the Fields of the sun, the lands that belong to the emperor and priests. Some serve in the army (see page 53) or build roads, temples, and fortresses. Others help transport goods around the empire or work in the mines, digging for gold, silver, or copper. Meanwhile, the Inca women support the men by cooking and weaving clothes. They also take care of the children as well as work on the land.

A CARING SOCIETY

In return for their services, the Inca Empire takes care of everyone in the Inca lands. If somebody becomes ill or is too old to work, the person is given shelter, clothes, and food. The Incas also plan ahead for disasters, such as floods or famine. Large stone storehouses are kept stocked with food, water, and clothing. These supplies are handed out in times of emergency. The Incas are very proud that nobody is forced to go hungry in their empire.



KEEPING A RECORD

Compared with many ancient lands, the Inca Empire is very well organized. What makes the Inca Empire really impressive is that it is run without writing anything down. The Incas don't have a written language. Instead, they keep their records on knotted strings called quipus (see box).

WHAT ARE QUIPUS?

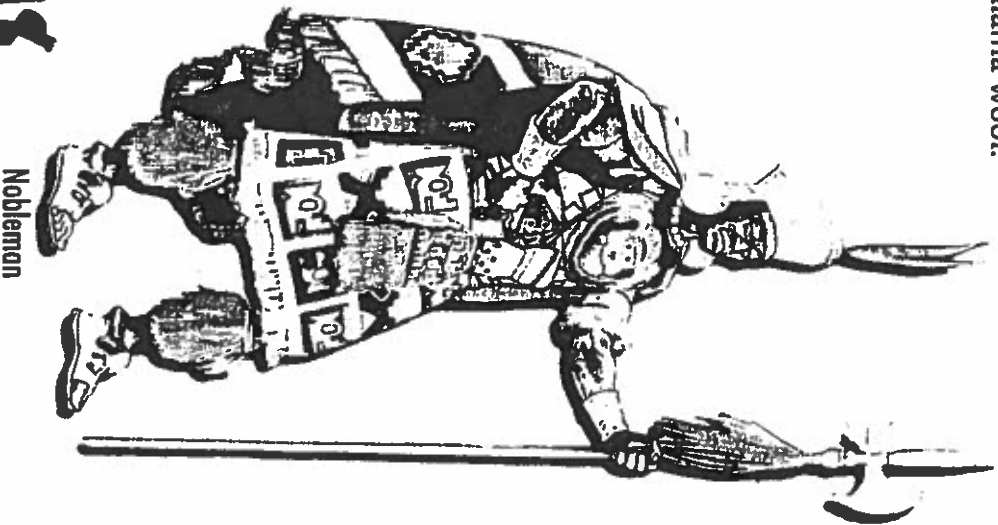
Quipus are lengths of different colored knotted string that are attached to one central cord. The color of the string stands for whatever is being counted (such as warriors or maize), and the various knots stand for different numbers. Special officials, known as quipu camayos, or quipu keepers, are taught how to understand the quipu system. They use quipus to organize everything, including raising armies, building roads, and storing corn.

CLOTHES AND CUSTOMS

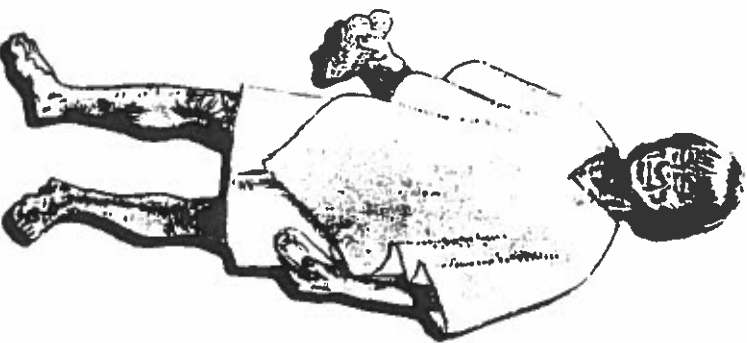
If you want to fit in with the Incas, you'll need to dress like them. Ordinary farming folk wear a simple tunic, sandals, and a patterned cloak woven from llama wool. Nobles dress in a similar style, but their clothes are made from alpaca wool, which is much softer and finer than llama wool.

BATMAN!
A Spanish visitor to the Inca Empire described the Emperor Atahualpa wearing a cloak made from the skins of vampire bats.

All Incas wear a short tunic and a cloak, but the nobleman's clothes are far grander and more colorful.



Nobleman



Former

To mix with the nobles, you'll need to wear some large, gold earplugs, but this will involve some pain. Inca earplugs are shaped like flat, round disks. They fit inside the earlobe, but first the skin of the earlobe has to be split and stretched. The Inca ruling classes also take frequent baths and spend a lot of time on their appearance. Men usually wear their hair long at the back and have bangs at the front. Women put their long hair in braids, which are either worn down the back or wrapped around the head.

HOW TO BEHAVE

Children in the Inca Empire are expected to be completely obedient and never complain, and they are brought up to be very tough. They are washed in icy water and left out in their cradles on cold nights. As soon as they are old enough, children are taught adult skills. Young boys have to look after animals, collect firewood, and scare away pests in the fields. Young girls have to help their mothers with the younger children. They also learn household tasks, such as cooking and weaving.

EDUCATION

If you end up in the countryside, there won't be any school for you. This is because the Sapa Inca believes that too much education is bad for the ordinary working people. However, some children do go to school. In Cuzco, boys from noble families study religion, poetry, and history.

WELCOME TO ADULT LIFE

If you're lucky you may get to see an initiation ceremony. This takes place when an Inca boy is around 14 years old. It marks the time when he becomes a man and takes on new work in his family. The boy has his legs whipped hard by all the elders of his family (family group). The pain is meant to remind him of his duties to his parents and elders!

RELIGION

Wherever you travel in the Inca Empire, you'll find temples and holy places. The Incas worship a range of gods and goddesses, but the most important of these are Viracocha, the creator, and Inti, the sun god. Other very important gods are Illapa, god of thunder and lightning, and Pacha Mama, goddess of the Earth.

SUN AND MOON

Inti is believed to be the father of the Sapa Inca and the great protector of the Inca people. Like the Sapa Inca, Inti is married to his sister, Mama Quilla, the moon. The Coya Inca (see page 13) is believed to be the daughter of the moon. You'll find a temple to Inti at the heart of all cities and towns.

INCA GODS AT A GLANCE

- Viracocha — the creator
- Inti — god of the sun
- Mama Quilla — the moon goddess
- Illapa — god of thunder and lightning
- K'uychi — the rainbow god
- Pacha Mama — goddess of the Earth
- Mama Cacha — goddess of the sea

HOLY PLACES

As well as worshipping the gods, the Incas worship holy places, known as *huacas*. These places can be rocks, caves, springs, and even trees, and all of them are believed to have magical powers. Watch out for *huacas* on your travels. Less important ones will have some offerings of maize beer beside them. More important *huacas* will be guarded by priests and priestesses. These holy places should be approached with care—the Incas make sacrifices to the *huacas*, offering llamas and sometimes even children!

PRIESTS AND PRIESTESSES

Some Incas devote their lives to the gods and become priests and priestesses. If a young girl is especially good and obedient, she is taken away from her village and trained to be an *aclla*. These holy women live together in a special house. They serve in temples and weave special clothes for the priests and emperor.

WORSHIPPING THE DEAD

You will need a very strong stomach in the Inca Empire. The Incas spend a lot of time paying their respects to the dead. In Cuzco the bodies of the dead Sapa Incas are preserved with embalming fluids and mummified. The mummified emperors are dressed in their royal robes, seated on their thrones, and given maize beer to drink. Meanwhile, all over the empire, people visit the tombs of their ancestors to offer them gifts and to ask them for advice.

Even ordinary people mummified their dead by setting the body out in the cold.



ON THE MOVE

The Inca Empire has one of the best road systems in the ancient world. There are 15,500 miles (25,000 kilometers) of roads, and many are paved with stone. There are two main highways running parallel to each other, one through the highlands and the other along the coast. They are always full of travelers and their llamas.



BRIDGE THAT GORGE!

Inca roads have to climb steep hills and cross deep river gorges. On the hillsides, roads are built in steps. River gorges are crossed by rope bridges made from braided reeds and anchored at each end to a stone platform. Bridges are sometimes 196 feet (60 meters) long and are just wide enough for two llamas to pass each other. Inca bridges look very scary, but there's no need to worry—they are checked regularly by an inspector.

FELLOW TRAVELERS

While you're on your travels, you'll see farmers on their way to the market with their llamas laden with produce. Look out for government officials hurrying from district to district with their bags full of quipus.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Watch out for messengers, known as *chasquis*, on the roads. They run very fast and don't stop for anyone! *Chasquis* run in teams, with new runners waiting at intervals along the road. They wear a headdress of white feathers and blow on a conch shell to warn the next runner to get ready. *Chasquis* carry messages at a speed of up to 200 miles (320 kilometers) a day. They either memorize their messages or carry *quipus*.

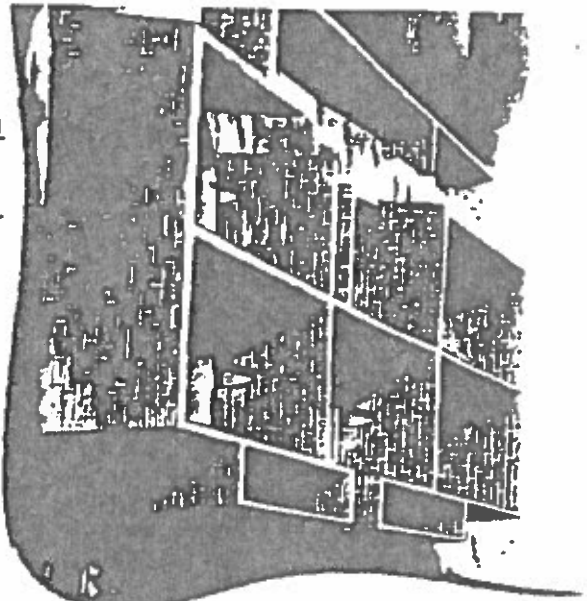
If you're really lucky, you might pass the emperor on one of his tours of the empire. The Sapa Inca and his Coya Inca travel in style—sitting in a wooden litter with a feathered roof, which is carried on the shoulders of servants. A grand procession of priests, servants, soldiers, musicians, and dancers accompanies the emperor wherever he goes.



PLACES TO STAY

You'll find a range of places to stay in the empire. You may be an honored guest in an emperor's palace, or join a farming family in their simple home. There are rest houses along the main highways known as *campos*. These are simple stone houses with thatched roofs, specially designed for travelers to spend the night and stock up on food and drink.

This 19th-century painting shows the remains of a luxurious Inca palace.



Inside the house you may find a stone bench, some niches in the wall and stone pegs for hanging up clothes. You will be expected to sleep on the floor on reed mats or llama skins. You'll find some cold spring water running in a stone channel outside the house for washing.

SHOCKPROOF BUILDINGS

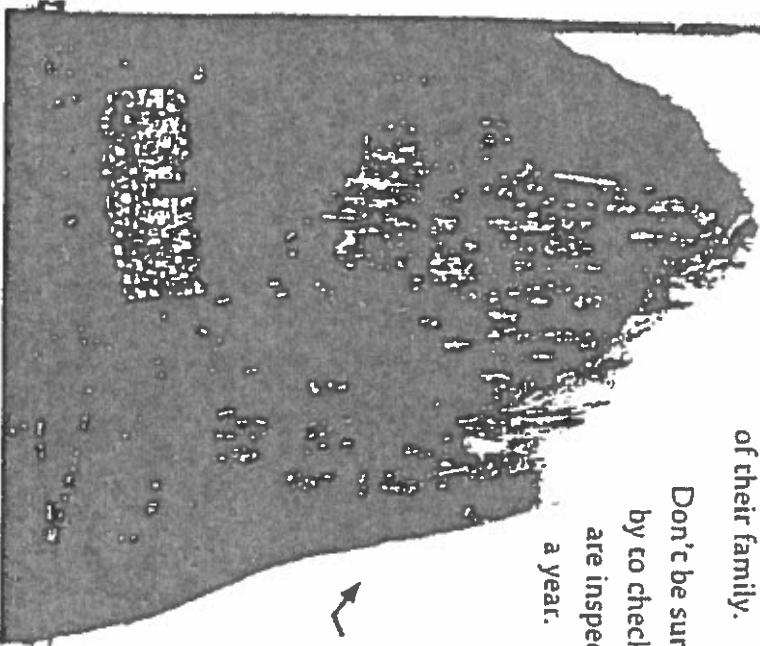
Most Inca buildings are made from interlocking granite blocks, with no cement to stick them together. The blocks fit together so well that, even when they are shaken by an earthquake, they usually fall back into position. The Incas use small hand-held hammer stones to shape their blocks. (If you look carefully at an Inca granite wall, you will see the marks made by the hammer stones.)

NO PRIVACY

Don't expect any privacy in an Inca home—everyone sleeps and eats together in the same room. Houses are usually grouped around a central courtyard. Here the women do their cooking and weaving while people hang out and chat with members of their family.

Don't be surprised if an official stops by to check up on you. Inca houses are inspected by officials twice a year.

You will probably stay in a simple Inca home like this. Don't expect many comforts—just concentrate on the amazing view!



Inca palaces can be very grand, especially if they belong to an emperor. You might see a grand entrance and huge reception halls. One advantage of Inca palaces is their plumbing. You will be able to enjoy a dip in a stone bath filled with water piped from a hot spring.

SIMPLE HOMES

Most houses in the Inca Empire are simple buildings with a thatched grass roof. Their walls are made from stone or adobe, mud bricks mixed with grass. Inca homes have one entrance covered with a cloth and (sometimes) a small, high window. Clay stoves provide heat in cold weather. There are no chimneys—smoke just rises up through the thatch, so be prepared for a drafty, smoky experience!

WHAT TO EAT

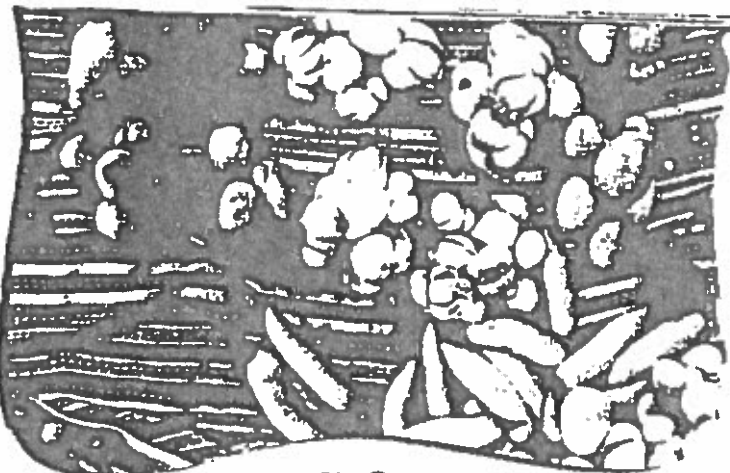
Inca food varies depending on where you are in the empire. In the highlands, the Incas grow more than 200 different varieties of potatoes. Potatoes are usually made into a thick soup. On the plains, maize is grown in very large quantities. Maize is sometimes eaten as corn on the cob or baked to make a form of popcorn. It's also ground into flour to make bread, porridge, and dumplings.

All the Incas, from the emperor downward, like to drink maize beer, or *chicha*. It tastes pretty strange, but the worst thing about *chicha* is the way it's made. First, old women chew the grains of maize very thoroughly. Then, they spit the mush into jars of warm water, where it ferments and turns into beer! *Chicha* is usually stored in large ceramic pots sunk into the ground, and is drunk from colorful drinking cups called *qeros*.

ADDING VARIETY

Apart from potatoes and maize, the Incas grow beans and vegetables, which they make into stews, with added chilis for flavor. In the mountains, farmers grow root vegetables. In the lower, flatter parts of the empire, the main crops are squashes and tomatoes. Most Inca families eat very little meat, although they sometimes add birds, frogs, and even worms to their stews! People on the coast eat a lot of fish.

Incans love hot and spicy food such as chilis and garlic.



If you want a really varied diet, you'll have to join the emperor and his nobles. Their food is imported from all over the empire. When you dine in a royal palace, you can expect to enjoy a wide range of cooked fish and birds as well as tropical fruit such as bananas. Even though Cuzco is nearly 300 miles (480 kilometers) from the Pacific Ocean, you can still enjoy fresh fish in an Inca noble's home. The nobles use the excellent road system to get their fish delivered within 24 hours.

TASTY TREATS!

Many Inca families have guinea pigs running round their houses, but they don't think of them as pets. The guinea pigs are allowed to feed off plants and kitchen scraps until they're nice and fat, and then the family eats them as a treat!

LOVE YOUR LLAMA!

Many farmers keep llamas, but they rarely use them for their meat. That's because llamas are much too useful to be eaten. Farmers use llama to carry heavy loads and to supply wool for weaving. Even the llamas' dung is used. It can be spread on the ground as fertilizer, or dried and used as fuel for fires.



FESTIVALS AND FUN

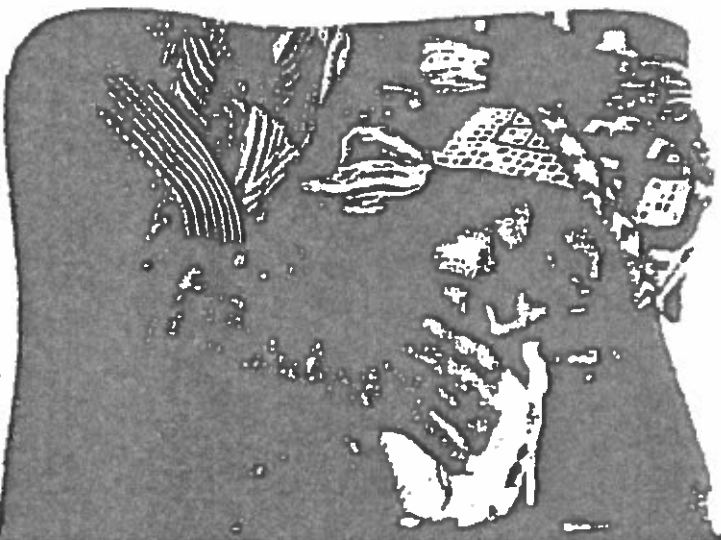
The Incas work very hard, but they also like to have fun. Families celebrate births and marriages, and there are many religious festivals throughout the year. While you're in the Inca Empire, make sure you join in some of these events. You'll see some sights you'll never forget!

MAKING MUSIC

The Incas don't have any stringed instruments, but they do have whistles, drums, bells, and rattles. They also blow loudly on conch shells, and play tunes on panpipes made from bamboo canes tied together.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE SUN

Inti Raymi, the festival of the sun, is the biggest celebration of the year. It is held in Cuzco at the end of the maize harvest. Before the sun rises on the day of the festival, all the mummified emperors are carried into the plaza and seated on golden thrones. The plaza is filled with the dead emperors' servants and all the Inca nobles, dressed in silver and gold.



Look out for people playing conch shell trumpets!

The Sapa Inca leads a chant to welcome the sun as it rises. This is the start of a day of celebration, which includes music, dancing, feasting, and military parades. At the end of the day all the Incas bow low to the departing sun.

CHASING AFTER THE RIVER

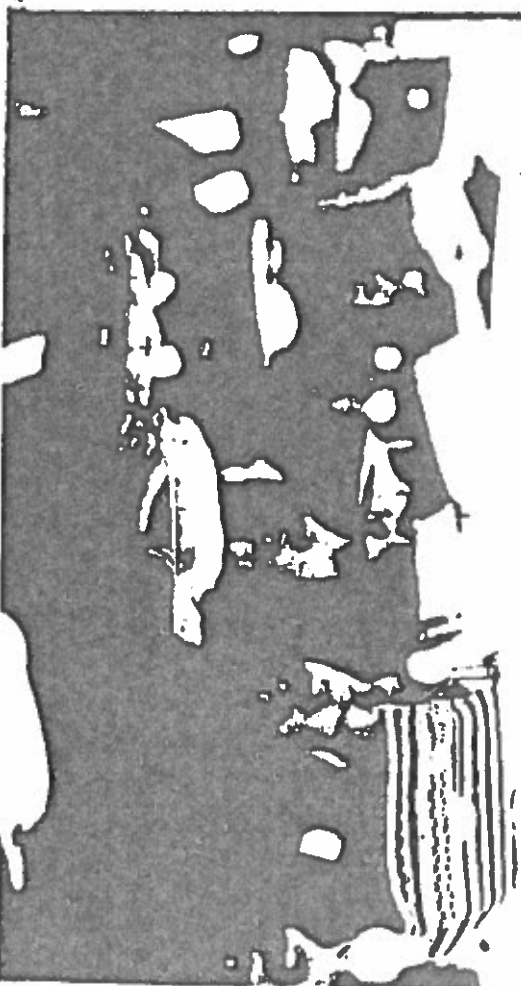
Muyucali, which means "chasing after the river," takes place in January. Ashes from animal sacrifices are thrown into the swollen river in Cuzco, at the height of the rainy season. Teenage boys chase the ashes down the river halfway to Machu Picchu. They then race each other back to Cuzco.

TEENAGE TESTS

The feast of Capac Raymi held in mid-December is a fast-moving spectacle and an endurance test for teenage boys. It's very exciting to watch, but don't be tempted to join in. You could easily end up dead!

The test begins with a group of teenage boys spending several nights on a freezing mountaintop, learning the legends of their ancestors. Then they descend to Cuzco to perform a special dance. After this, they race each other up and down four different mountain peaks. On the twenty-first day, the boys who have survived are dressed in fine clothes and have their earlobes split. ready to be given their golden earplugs—the sign that they have become an adult.

Women offering plates of food at *Inti Raymi*, the festival of the sun, which is held in Cuzco once a year.



HEALTH ADVICE

Travelers to the Inca Empire should be prepared for some exhausting and dangerous climbs. You will also have to get used to the thin mountain air. Most foreign visitors to Machu Picchu suffer from altitude sickness—a feeling of weakness, breathlessness, and nausea.

Many travelers also find it hard to adjust to the dramatic changes in temperature, from hot and steamy rainforests to freezing mountaintops.

VISITING A DOCTOR

If you do get sick, you will need to visit a doctor, called a *hampi mayoc*. Inca doctors are experts at curing fevers and dressing wounds. To help them in their task, they use a range of medicines and ointments made from rainforest plants.

HOLE IN THE HEAD

You'd better not complain of a headache while you're in the Inca Empire. Some Inca doctors practice a technique called trepanning. This involves making a hole in a patient's skull to drain off fluid from the brain.



P.50

KEEPING UP WITH THE INCAS

Don't expect to keep up with the Incas. You are not as well adapted to the mountain environment as they are. They have broad shoulders, very strong legs, and deep chests with extra lung capacity.

If you need an operation, there are also plenty of skilled surgeons in the Inca Empire. And don't worry too much about the pain. The Incas have some powerful pain-killing drugs, such as quinine, coca leaves, and strong cactus beer.

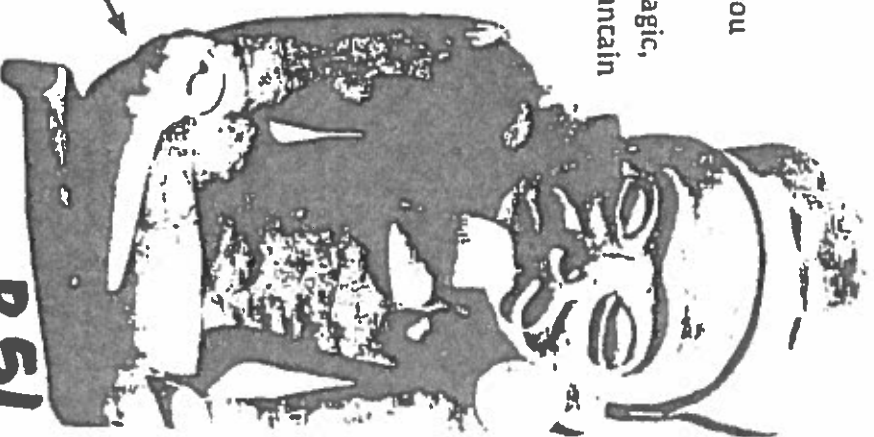
Inca doctors are excellent at curing dysentery and tropical diseases. But don't expect them to be able to treat you for the flu. When the Incas caught influenza from the Spanish soldiers, their doctors were powerless to cure them.

MAINLY MAGIC

If the Inca doctors can't cure you, you could try visiting a shaman instead.

Shamans are healers who rely on magic, and they usually live in remote mountain caves. Once you've reached the shaman, you can expect to take part in a mysterious ritual to drive out evil spirits from your body. Rituals usually involve trances, chants, and spells. You will probably also need to take along a llama or a guinea pig to be sacrificed to the gods.

A visit to an Inca shaman can be a scary experience!



P.51

THE END OF THE INCAS

In 1532 the Spanish adventurer Francisco Pizarro landed on the north coast of Peru with fewer than 260 soldiers. He immediately set off inland searching for gold and treasures. Pizarro defeated the Incas in a fierce battle in northern Peru and took Emperor Acahualpa prisoner.

PIZARRO'S TRICK

Pizarro agreed to release Acahualpa if the Incas would pay a ransom in silver and gold. The Incas stripped Cuzco of its treasures and presented them to Pizarro, who started to melt them down. But, instead of releasing Acahualpa as they had promised, the Spaniards kept the emperor imprisoned and eventually put him to death. Then they marched towards the city of Cuzco, defeating several Inca armies on their way.

SPANISH CONQUERORS

The Spanish conquistadors easily took control of Cuzco. In order to gain the support of the Incas, Pizarro set up Manco Capac II (Acahualpa's half-brother) as emperor, but the Spaniards were really in charge. For the next four years the Spaniards controlled the empire but allowed the Incas to continue to hold their ceremonies.

FRANCISCO PIZARRO (AROUND 1475-1541)

Francisco Pizarro was the son of a Spanish gentleman. In 1510 he joined a ship heading for Colombia, South America. Pizarro learned about the wealth of the Inca Empire and, in 1524, led an expedition there. His third and final expedition into Inca territory, in 1532, led to the fall of the empire. Once he had gained control of Cuzco, Pizarro set up a new capital city in Lima. He divided the Inca lands among his fellow Spaniards, but this led to bitter fighting. In 1541, Pizarro was killed by the followers of one of his Spanish rivals.

In 1536 Manco Capac II managed to escape from Cuzco and was eventually to lead a rebellion against the Spaniards. After several months of attacking the Spaniards, the Inca rebels abandoned Cuzco and retreated to the rainforest. There, a small band of Incas set up a rival kingdom. This continued until 1572, when one of Manco's descendants, Tupac Amaru, was finally captured and executed in public in Cuzco's main square.

THE END OF THE INCA EMPIRE

The death of Tupac Amaru, the last Sapa Inca, marked the end of the Inca Empire. But in fact the empire already was in ruins. Spanish troops had taken over all the towns, set up a new capital in Lima, and divided the Incas' lands between them. They also forced the Inca people to work for them in their fields and mines. During the 16th century, many thousands of Incas died from harsh treatment by Spanish settlers. Thousands more were wiped out by smallpox, measles, and influenza—diseases brought to South America by the Spaniards.

INCAS TODAY

The Inca lands were ruled by Spain until the 19th century. Wrecks of the countries of South America finally gained their independence. Today, there are many descendants of the Incas still living in Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Chile.