

WEATHER

Arequipa is dry and sunny all year long. During August, the weather gets slightly cold at night and at dawn, but the mornings and afternoons are warmed by bright sunshine. Generally speaking, the weather in Arequipa is mild with temperatures fluctuating between **10°C / 18°F** and **24°C / 43.20°F**. The rainy season lasts from January to March but rainfall is reasonably moderate.

Considering its altitude, Arequipa is an excellent place to begin gradual acclimatization to the higher Andes. From there you can move on to the Colca Valley (11,810 fmsl), Cusco (11,000 fmsl) and Puno (12,460 fmsl). A two day stay in Arequipa considerably reduces the chances of getting soroche or altitude sickness.

HOW TO GET THERE?

BY CRUISE

Matarani is a seaport in which cruise ships can arrive. From there, one can access the different attractions in the department as well as the Southern Peruvian Tourist Corridor.

BY BUS

From Lima: 1,009 km/15 hours
From Cusco: 491 km/9 hours
From Puno: 294 km/5 hours
From Tacna: 270 km/3 hours 30 minutes

BY AIR

From Lima: 1 hour
From Cusco: 30 minutes
From Juliaca-Puno: 20 minutes
From Tacna: 30 minutes
Arequipa is served by Rodriguez Ballon Airport

SUGGESTED FOR

History, archaeology and petro glyph buffs, who will thoroughly enjoy the city of Arequipa and its architecture (mansions and churches), Atiquipa, the Toro Muerto petro glyphs and the Sumbay caves.

Nature lovers, bird watchers and researchers, who, while visiting the surrounding countryside, the Colca and Cotahuasi valleys, Lagunas de Mejia National Sanctuary and the Salinas and Aguada Blanca National Reserve, will experience the greatness these lands have been blessed with.

Adventure sports aficionados, who live for trekking, rafting, mountaineering (ascending volcanoes like mounts Misti, Chachani, Ampato and Coropuna, as well as other peaks in the Chila Mountain Range) and rock climbing.

Others:

Hydrotherapy devotees, who will find that the volcanic nature of the department's geology has produced hot springs with medicinal properties, like those in Yura and Socosani near the city of Arequipa, Calera Chivay and Yanque in the Colca, Huancarama in the Valley of the Volcanoes and Luicho in Cotahuasi.

PLACES TO VISIT

IN AREQUIPA

Main Square and the Cathedral: The main square, famous for its symmetrical harmony and the architectural elegance of its double arcade.

Church and Cloisters of the Company of Jesus:

A supreme testimony of 17th century religious architecture, the church and its adjoining cloisters are located at one of the corners to the Main Square. As quoted by experts, it might just be the most beautiful and complete architectural complex in Arequipa.

Saint Catherine Monastery: A small, wall-in city within a city, it has cloisters, plazas, streets, buildings with Spanish roof tiles and cobblestones floors. It opened in 1580 as a cloister for nuns. Display on its interior are Colonial paintings from the Cusco school, wood carvings, statues, objects of worship and well preserved rooms showing what daily life was like for nuns more than 400 years ago.

La Recoleta Convent: A 17th century Franciscan convent, the architectural styles vary from Romantic Neogothic. It is famous for its enormous library containing more than 20,000 books, some of which are more than 400 years old.

Yanahuara Plaza: One of the most important

churches in Arequipa, the Church of Saint John the Baptist, is located in this peaceful plaza. It was built in 1750 and is still considered to be an architecture jewel.

Santa Maria Catholic University Museum of Archaeology and of Andean Sanctuaries:

The former is an exposition, in chronological and scientific order, of the entire cultural development of the department of Arequipa throughout history, and the latter displays different mummies, such as the Ica Maiden (Mummy Juanita)

SITES IN AREQUIPA COUNTRYSIDE

Sabandia: a lovely district, where pre-Incan terraces are still used to grow crops. Some of the houses still flaunt Republican architectural traces from the 19th century. There is also a Colonial mill, the Molino de Sabandia.

Socabaya: a town full of history where you can explore a place called The Socabaya Rocks, caves that distill water; likewise, the City Founder's House was built in Huasacache, a mansion for the founder of Arequipa, Garci Manuel de Carbajal.

EXCURSIONS

Lagunas de Mejia National Sanctuary: It is the only surviving wetlands along 2,000 km of coastline in Peru.

Toro Muerto and Querullpa: Toro Muerto contains one of the world's largest collections of petro glyphs. It is an area of 1,236 acres strewn with stone upon which ancient peoples carved thousands of images (animals, geometric designs and dancers) between the years 700 A.D and 1,500 AD.

Valley of the Volcanoes: (Andagua) An enchanted land, starting at an altitude 5,577 fasl and rising to 12,467 fasl, where more than 30 small coned volcanoes can be seen.

Salinas and Aguada Blanca National Reserve: An impressive setting of volcanoes, Rivers and slat licks and strange rock formations. The area has 840,158-acre extension, and within it rise mounts Miste (19,160 fasl), Chachani (19,931 fasl) and Ubinas (18,622 fasl), all volcanoes and the latter being the most active in Peru nowadays.

Colca Valley and Canyon: A destination that never runs out of experiences, gathering together natural wealth, living history and adventure sports like rafting, mountaineering, mountain biking, hiking and horse back riding.

EXCURSIONS

Its depth has been measured at 11,155 feet (twice that of the Grand Canyon).

Cotahuasi Valley and Canyon: A striking natural setting in the heights of the department, home to a huge amount of biodiversity and scenic beauty, such as the impressive vistas of mounts Coropuna and Solimana, eternally snow-covered.

WHAT TO BUY?

You can practically reach out and touch the vibe of the culture expressed by Arequipa's watercolorists, modern painters and writers, not to mention the artisans who work in **sillar stone**, **textiles**, **embroidery** (absolute best found in Colca) and **leather embossing**. There are also the producers of fine **chocolates** and **fine liqueurs**.

WHAT TO EAT?

To experience the true taste of the White City, you must find your way to one of the so-called picanterias (traditional restaurants where they cook over open flame). A good table begins with a **rocoto relleno** (spicy red chili pepper that is stuffed with beef, spices, and hard boiled egg, topped with a cheese and milk mixture, then oven baked), moves on to the soups, preferably the **caldo blanco** (chunks of mutton, potatoes, corn, garbanzo beans, starch and spices) or the **puchero** (boiled beef, pork and chicken with vegetables and spices) passes to the main dishes, of which there are many fabulous options to choose from, like **adobe** (pork loin marinated in garlic, onions and **chicha de jora** –corn beer- and served with bread), any of the **picantes** (stew with a base of pork, beef, mutton or duck), a **chupe de camarones** (prawn chowder, seasoned with red chili peppers and chocked full of faba beans, rice, corn kernels and potatoes) or the fried **Malaya** (flank steak, boiled and seared) and ends with a dessert, the favorite **queso helado** ("frozen cheese" directly translated, but really a type of coconut and cinnamon ice cream), but you may also choose from a wide range of **chocolates and toffees**. To wash all that down, order one of the local beers or a

regionally produced soft drink or even chicha de jora. If you wish for a "digestivo" – a beverage to aid in digestion, drank after the meal – then order a **"te piteado"** (anise infusion) or **Anis Najari** (a local anisette)