

WEATHER

The best time to go to Ayacucho is from April to October, when there is 9-hour sunshine and the climate is dry. The rainy season runs between November and March. Maximum temperatures **25.5°C / 77.9° F**, minimum temperature **6.6°C / 43.88° F**.

On the first day in Ayacucho, we highly recommend eating something light, drinking coca tea (mate de coca) and avoiding alcoholic beverages. One thing to remember when shopping: buyers are expected to bargain for the goods they wish to get.

HOW TO GET THERE?

BY CAR/BUS

From Lima: 556 km/8 hours via Los Libertadores Highway
From Pisco (Ica): 389 km/5 hours via Los Libertadores Highway
From Cusco: 601 km/22 hours
From Huancayo: 317 km/9 hours via Colcabamba 257 km/9 hours via Ancco
From Huancavelica: 245 km/5 hours via Rumichaca 221 km/6 hours via Lircay

BY AIR

From Lima: 1 hour daily regular flights.
Ayacucho is served by Alfredo Mendivil Duarte Airport

SUGGESTED FOR

History aficionados, who will enjoy isiting the Pampa de Ayacucho, site of the battle where South American independence from Spain was sealed, back in 1824.

Handicraft collectors, who should definitely go to the neighborhood of San Ana.

Archaeology buffs, who cannot afford missing out on the Vilcashuaman site.

Nature Lovers, who will thoroughly enjoy their visit to see the cluster of puyas at Vishcongo.

PLACES TO VISIT IN AYACUCHO

Main Square: when the Incas ruled Cusco, it was known as the Huacaypata, or “place of weeping or of meeting”, and was the backdrop to sacred ceremonies held there.

Colonial churches: There are 33 churches and each one possesses an extremely ornate altar. The following are the stand-outs: the Cathedral (1612), Church of the Company of Jesus (XVII century), Church of Saint Christopher (1540), which is the oldest in the city, Church of Saint Francis of Assisi (1552), Church and Convent of Saint Claire (1568), Church of Saint Teresa (1688); Church and Convent of Saint Dominic (1548), and the Church of our Lady of Mercy (1541).

Colonial casonas (mansions): Main traits of these buildings are their wide hallways, stone portals of great detail and walls featuring animal motifs, mainly pumas and serpents. The most important among these mansions are: Casona Vivanco (XVII century), Casona Ruiz de Ochoa (XVII century), Casona Boza y Solis (1740) and the Casona Castilla y Zamora (1677), now home of the San Cristobal de Huamanga National University.

OUT OF AYACUCHO

Artisan quarter of Santa Ana: It is a quarter traditionally populated by families craftsmen, who express their creativity in the different types of handicrafts made in the region, such as Huamanga stone carvings, knitting, retablos, tin plating, pottery, leather work, among many others.

Wari archaeological complex: It is one of the largest urban centers from ancient Peru, belonging to the Wari culture, which flourished between the 6th and 11th centuries A.D.

Town of Quinua: The town itself has preserved its typical Andean spirit, and its inhabitants mainly make their living from creating pottery. Here, the Spanish signed the final capitulation, thus putting an end to their ruling in South America.

Pampa de Ayacucho Historic Sanctuary:

This was the scene of the Battle of Ayacucho (1824) and a commemorative obelisk has been built. You can take horseback rides in this area.

Vilcashuaman: “Sacred Falcon” in Quechua. It was a prominent Incan administrative center that also includes a church built by the Conquistadors with stones taken from the site. It has its own Temple of the Sun and Moon and an impressive ceremonial platform, called Ushno.

Pampa Galeras Barbara D’Achille National Reserve:

A vast plain with rolling hills, surrounded by valleys and ravines. Apart from being the best natural refuge for one of the most beautiful Andean animals, the vicuna, it is also the habitat of other native animals, like Andean fox, the taruca (a species of Andean deer), the vizcacha and a large variety of birds. You can enter the reserve directly from the city of Nasca (Ica)

WHAT TO BUY?

The craft most associated with Ayacucho is its famous **retablos** (type of portable shrine) in which artisans depict scenes filled with local customs and religious images. In terms of fabrics, weavers and knitters use techniques that have been passed down from master to apprentice for generations, like naturally dyeing the threads used in **carpets** and **shawls**. Other familiar souvenirs you can pick up in Ayacucho are carved Huamanga stones (alabaster), and last but not least, any of the art works done in silver **filigree**.

WHAT TO EAT?

Although there is no lack of international and traditional **Peruvian Creole food**, you will mostly find restaurants offering local Ayacucho dishes. Regional cuisine is characterized by the use of plenty of pork, vegetables and Andean grains. Its most well known dish is **puca picante**, a stew of deep fried pork, seasoned with peanut sauce, beets, red chili peppers and annatto. When you sit down to order an appetizer ask for **qapchi**, a salad made from new potatoes (somewhat starchier than normal), chunks of fresh cheese, diced onions and yellow chili peppers, and the soup should be **patache** (wheat and bacon, mainly). If it is a am you crave at breakfast for your bread, then ask for the **sauco** (elderberry).