



Arequipa & Canyon Country

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

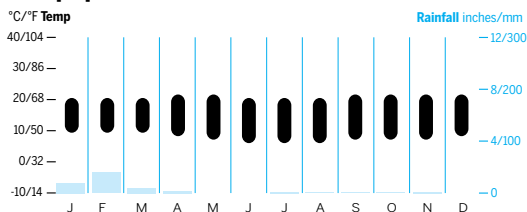
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Why Go?

Arequipa province is Peru's big combo ticket. Authentic historical immersion and white-knuckle Andean adventure inhabit the same breathing space here. Imagine the cultural riches of one of South America's finest colonial cities just a few hours' drive from the world's two deepest canyons and you'll get a hint of the dramatic contrasts. Ample urban distractions can be found in Arequipa, the arty, audacious, unflappably resilient metropolis that lies in the shadow of El Misti volcano. Beckoning to the northwest lie the Colca and Cotahuasi canyons whose depth, while impressive, is a mere statistic compared to the Andean condors, epic treks, and long-standing Spanish, Inca and pre-Inca traditions that lurk in their midst. Other unusual apparitions include the lava encrusted Valle de los Volcanes, the haunting Toro Muerto petroglyphs, and the barren Paso de Patopampa where a main road ascends to 4910m, higher than any point in Western Europe or North America.

When to Go

Arequipa



Mar–Apr Arequipa puts on a Semana Santa parade to rival the cities of former colonial power, Spain

Apr–Dec Outside of the rainy season, hiking in the Colca and Cotahuasi canyons is sublime

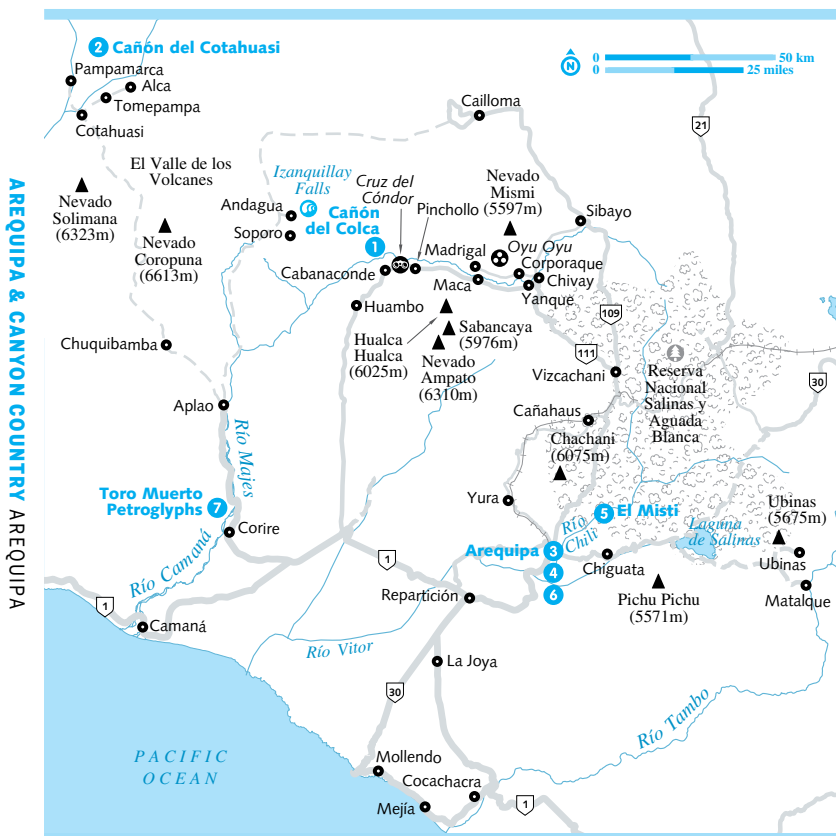
Jun–Sep Your best chance of seeing Andean condors gliding above the Colca Canyon

AREQUIPA

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It's hard playing second fiddle to Cuzco and Machu Picchu on Peru's international tourist circuit, not that this little detail makes the average *arequipeño* jealous. Other Peruvians joke that you need a different passport to enter Peru's second-largest city, a metropolis

one-tenth of the size of the capital Lima but pugnaciously equal to it in terms of cuisine, historical significance and confident self-awareness. Guarded by not one but *three* dramatic volcanoes, the city enjoys a resplendent, if seismically precarious setting – earthquakes regularly wrack this region, the last big one causing significant damage in 2001. Fortunately, the city's architecture, a



Arequipa & Canyon Country Highlights

- 1 Watching massive Andean condors catch thermal uplifts above the almost sheer walls of the **Cañón del Colca** (p158)
- 2 Wandering way off the beaten track in the isolated **Cañón del Cotahuasi** (p165)
- 3 Getting a glimpse of austere, monastic life behind the high stone walls of the **Monasterio de Santa Catalina** (p139) in Arequipa
- 4 Dining the traditional way in one of Arequipa's **picanterías** (p151)
- 5 Making a summit attempt on the almost perfectly symmetrical cone of **El Misti volcano** (p157)
- 6 Studying the frozen remains of Juanita in the **Museo Santuarios Andinos** (p140)
- 7 Pondering the meaning of the mysterious **Toro Muerto petroglyphs** (p164)