



Lake Titicaca

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Best Places to Stay & Eat

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- » Casa Andina Isla Suasi (p184)
- » Casa Panq'arani (p173)
- » Capachica community homestays (p184)
- » Mojsa (p176)

Best Festivals

- » La Virgen de la Candelaria (p172)
- » Puno Week (p173)
- » Fiesta de San Juan (p173)
- » Alacitas (p173)
- » Feast of Saint James (p173)

Why Go?

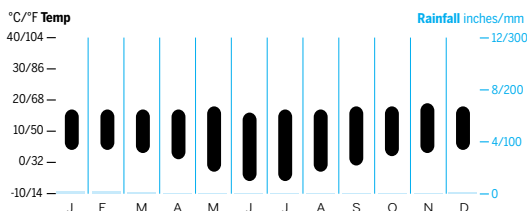
In Andean belief, Titicaca is the birthplace of the sun. In addition, it's the largest lake in South America and the highest navigable body of water in the world. Banner blue skies contrast with bitterly cold nights. Enthralling and in many ways singular, the shimmering deep blue Lake Titicaca is the longtime home of highland cultures steeped in the old ways.

Pre-Inca Pukara, Tiwanaku and Collas all left their mark upon the landscape. Today the region is a mix of crumbling cathedrals, desolate altiplano and checkerboard fields backed by rolling hills and high Andean peaks. In this world, crops are still planted and harvested by hand. *Campesinos* wear sandals recycled from truck tires, women work in petticoats and bowler hats, and llamas are tame as pets.

It might first appear austere, but ancient holidays are marked with riotous celebrations where elaborately costumed processions and brass bands ripcord a frenzy that lasts for days.

When to Go

Puno



Early Feb For the marvelous spectacle of the festival of La Virgen de la Candelaria.

Jun–Aug Winter's dry season heralds cold, clear nights and bright sunny days.

Early Nov Puno Week celebrates the birth of Mánco Capac, the first Inca, in wild style.

① Getting There & Around

There are daily flights to Juliaca (one hour from Puno) from Lima and Cuzco. Regular buses travel from Arequipa, Cuzco and Lima to Juliaca and Puno. There's also an iconic train route from Cuzco (see p178). If arriving from sea level, it's best to travel overland in order to better acclimate to the altitude; flying straight from Lima can serve up quite a headache.

It's also possible to arrive from Bolivia by bus or a packaged island tour of Lake Titicaca.

Juliaca

②051 / TRANSPORT HUB / ELEV 3826M

The region's only commercial airport makes Juliaca, the largest city on the altiplano, an unavoidable transit hub. The city bustles



Lake Titicaca Highlights

- ① Boat the serene blue expanse to the mystical islands (p181) of Lake Titicaca
- ② Celebrate festivals with blaring brass bands and crazy costumes in **Puno** (p174), Peru's capital folklórico
- ③ Admire the elaborate temples that dwarf Lake

Titicaca's bucolic **south-shore towns** (p186)

- ④ Hike across farmland and climb hills to overgrown ruins in **Ichu** (p186)
- ⑤ Visit awe-inspiring funerary towers at **Sillustani** (p179) and **Cutimbo** (p179)

- ⑥ Recharge your batteries on the sunny, somnolent **Capachica Peninsula** (p184)
- ⑦ Stargaze and sleep on board the historic steamship **Yavari** (p176)
- ⑧ Cross into Bolivia to explore the legendary **Isla del Sol** (p190)