



# Lake Titicaca

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## Best Places to Stay & Eat

- ➔ Titilaka (p186)
- ➔ Casa Andina Isla Suasi (p186)
- ➔ Casa Panq'arani (p179)
- ➔ Capachica Community Homestays (p187)
- ➔ Mojsa (p181)

## Best Festivals

- ➔ La Virgen de la Candelaria (p177)
- ➔ Puno Week (p178)
- ➔ Fiesta de San Juan (p178)
- ➔ Alacitas (p178)
- ➔ Feast of St James (p178)

## Why Go?

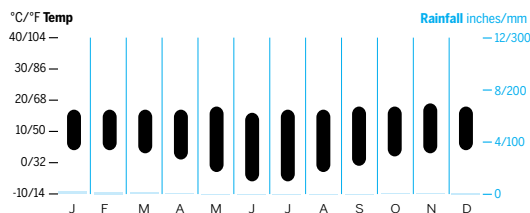
In Andean belief, Titicaca is the birthplace of the sun. In addition, it's the largest lake in South America and the highest navigable body of water in the world. Banner blue skies contrast with bitterly cold nights. Enthralling and in many ways singular, the shimmering deep blue Lake Titicaca is the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

Pre-Inca Pukara, Tiwanaku and Collas all left a mark on 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* (peasants) wear sandals recycled from truck tires, women work in petticoats and bowler hats, and llamas are tame as pets.

It might at first appear austere, but ancient holidays are marked with riotous celebrations where elaborately costumed processions and brass bands start 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 Manco Cápac, the first Inca, in wild style.

## i 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 to Puno. If arriving from sea level, it's best to travel overland to better acclimate to the altitude.

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

## Juliaca

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The region's only commercial airport makes Juliaca, the largest city on the altiplano, an unavoidable transit hub. The city bustles with commerce (and contraband) due to its handy location near the border. Daytime muggings and drunks on the street are not uncommon. Since Juliaca has little to offer



## Lake Titicaca Highlights

- 1 Boating the serene blue expanse to the **islands** (p184) of Lake Titicaca.
- 2 Celebrating festivals with blaring bands and crazy costumes in **Puno** (p177), Peru's capital *folklórico*.
- 3 Admiring the elaborate temples that dwarf Lake

- Titicaca's bucolic **south-shore towns** (p189).
- 4 Hiking across farmland and climbing hills to ruins in **Ichu** (p189).
  - 5 Visiting awe-inspiring funerary towers at **Sillustani** (p183) and **Cutimbo** (p183).

- 6 Recharging your batteries on sunny **Capachica Peninsula** (p187).
- 7 Stargazing and sleeping onboard the historic steamship **Yavari** (p174).
- 8 Crossing into Bolivia to explore the legendary **Isla del Sol**.