



## MACHU PICCHU

Machu Picchu in Peru, which means 'Old Peak', is one of the most mysterious ancient sites in the world. It is tangible evidence of the urban Inca Empire at the peak of its power and achievement. Landscape engineering skills are apparent and impressive in light of the knowledge they lacked.

When Machu Picchu was built some 500 years ago the Inca had no iron, no steel, no mortar and no wheels. They had no written language, so there is no record of why they built the site or how they used it before it was abandoned in the early 16th century.

The complex of palaces and plazas, temples and homes – all very well preserved – may have been built as a ceremonial site, a military stronghold, or a retreat for ruling elites. These gray granite structures, some of which weigh more than 50 tons, are so perfectly sculpted that they are nothing less than works of architectural genius.

Machu Picchu appears to lie at the centre of a network of related sites and trails—and many landmarks both man-made and mountainous appear to align with astronomical events like the solstice sunset. The ruins lie on a high ridge, surrounded on three sides by the Urubamba River. Scholars are still striving to uncover clues to the mysteries hidden here high in the eastern slopes of the Andes, covered with tropical forests of the upper Amazon Basin and the beauty, workmanship and history of the place attract more than 75,000 people every year.

Machu Picchu was rediscovered by a Yale archaeologist in 1911 and it is one of the most important archaeological sites in the world and therefore it is on the UNESCO world heritage list.

Country: Peru

Nationality: Peruvian(s)

Official languages: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara and other Amazonian languages

### Questions:

- 1) Where is Machu Picchu situated?
- 2) Have you ever visited it? Would you like to?
- 3) Who built Machu Picchu, why and when?
- 4) Do you know any other UNESCO sight in the world?