

2. PROVINCE OF ICA

The **Province of Ica** is located on the central south coast of the Peruvian seaside. The important pre-Inca civilizations of Paracas (700 years B.C.) and Nasca (300 years B.C.) developed here. The men of Paracas practiced the trepanation of skulls on living bodies using knives made of "obsidiana," a kind of volcanic rock. They also achieved great developments in the art of weaving. The Nasca culture stood out for its knowledge of hydraulic engineering, building aqueducts and subterranean canals reinforced by inner walls of stone and roofs of huarango. Ica is recognized as a region of desert and sea, sand dunes and valleys, the local pisco wine and religious pilgrimages, such as to the Señor de Luren or the Sanctuary of Yauca.

Ica

The city of Ica is situated about 185 miles (300 km) south of Lima and has 170,000 inhabitants. It is the capital of the province that carries its name. The main sights here are the Regional Museum, with its interesting collection of objects dating from pre-Incan cultures of the region, and the oasis *Huacachina*, situated in the outskirts of Ica. It is surrounded by huge sand dunes and is a popular spot for both locals and visitors.

Paracas

The name "Paracas" derives from a culture that was living on the peninsula south of Lima from 900 to 200 B.C. The village is known for its proximity to the Ballestas Islands, a group of small, rocky islands that are home to thousands of seabirds such as Peruvian boobies and cormorants, plus a colonies of sea lions and Humboldt penguins. It is also possible to fly over the famous Nasca Lines from the nearby airfield in Pisco.

Nasca

The small town of Nasca with 23,000 inhabitants is situated about 280 miles (450 km) south of Lima. It is well known thanks to the nearby lines and drawings in the desert with the same name. The Nasca Lines have been on the UNESCO Cultural Heritage of Mankind list since 1994. Some of the drawings are up to 13 miles (20 km) long and can only be seen from the air. The shapes include a spider, monkey, hummingbird and condor, among others. Created approximately 2,200 years ago, their origin and purpose remain mostly shrouded in the mists of time.

Ica, Paracas, Nasca - Excursions

Tour to Ballestas Islands (2h)

Boarding from the pier you will leave to the Ballestas Islands, on your journey you will appreciate the famous Candelabro, considered to be the beginning of the Nasca Lines. Having arrived at the Ballestas Islands, you will be observing many different animal species. Whoever visits this beautiful place, will be entranced by its flora and fauna. There are seven seal rookeries located within the reserve, home of approximately five thousand sea lions. The greatest quantity of fur seals is concentrated on the islet of El Arquillo, where there also are sea lions, concentrated in Punta Quemada.

****Remark:** *Ballestas Islands are protected and not to be walked on. You will not leave the boat on this excursion but will go near enough to take good pictures of the animals. The length of the boat excursion is about 2 hours. The tour is shared with international travelers and accompanied by bilingual Spanish/English speaking guide. This tour will be done with an eco-friendly motor boat.*

Excursion to the National Reserve of Paracas (2h)

You will be picked up at the hotel and start your guided tour into the Paracas National Reserve. It is a protected area, the only one in Peru protecting both a piece of land and a piece of coastline including the ocean. The reserve features lonely beaches and worth seeing cliffs. At the end of the trip, there is a small interpretation center where you can get more information about flora and fauna of the region. From the viewing point, you may want to observe the flamingos later.

Overflight of the Nasca Lines

The Nasca Lines are a series of ancient geoglyphs located in the Nasca Desert of Peru. They have been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A unique place in the world, full of mystery and mysticism, wonderful traces of immense figures and lines of spectacular perfection. Diverse scientific theories have been placed on these lines. Some of the figures that you will appreciate are the monkey, the spider, the Astronaut and the Humming bird.

****Remark:** *The exact time for the overflight of the Nasca Lines can only be confirmed one day prior the flight. There is no guide during the flight only the Pilot will give instructions about the location of each figure during the flight. The flight is shared with other passengers.*

****Important:** *The Overflight can be taken from Nasca (30min), Ica (80min) or Pisco (90min).*

Excursion to the Ballestas Islands and to the ruins of Tambo Colorado from Ica (6h)

You will be picked up at the hotel and driven to Paracas where you will board a speedboat to go to Ballestas Islands. On the way out to the Pacific Ocean, you pass by the National Reserve of Paracas that consists of land and sea. During a short photo stop you will be able to take pictures of the figure of „El Candelabro“, etched into the side of a hill. Once you reach the islands, you have the chance to see animals in their natural environment. There are thousands of different birds, as well as sea lions, cormorants, pelicans and penguins to take pictures of. Afterwards, you go to the ruins of Tambo Colorado. The site is built of adobe, clay bricks, and dates back to the year 1480. Most probably, it was used by the Inca as an administrative center. It consists of a ceremonial square with the main temple and various other buildings being chambers and baths.

****Remark:** *Ballestas Islands are protected and not to be walked on. You will not leave the boat on this excursion but will go near enough to take good pictures of the animals. The length of the boat excursion is about 2 hours and is shared with other passengers.*

Excursion to the Ballestas Islands and National Reserve of Paracas from Ica (6h)

You will be picked up at the hotel and driven to Paracas where you will board a speedboat to go to Ballestas Islands. On the way out to the Pacific Ocean, you pass by the National Reserve of Paracas that consists of land and sea. During a short photo stop you will be able to take pictures of the figure of „El Candelabro“, etched into the side of a hill. Once you reach

the islands, you have the chance to see animals in their natural environment. There are thousands of different birds, as well as sea lions, cormorants, pelicans and penguins to take pictures of. Then you go to the National Reserve of Paracas. It is a protected area containing land and sea with lonely beaches and worth seeing cliffs. At the end of the trip, there is a small interpretation center where you can get more information about flora and fauna of the region. From the viewing point, you may want to observe the flamingos later.

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City Tour Ica and visit of the Regional Museum (2h 30min)

You will be picked up at the hotel and start with a City Tour of Ica. You will go to the city center and afterwards head to the Regional Museum. Here, a worth seeing collection of ceramics, textiles and mummies of the Paracas and Nasca cultures are exhibited. On a small vineyard, you will try the locally produced Pisco before you end the tour at the oasis Huacachina. Here, you can relax surrounded by sand dunes and underneath palm trees until it is time to go back to the hotel.

Excursion to the ruins of Tambo Colorado from Paracas (4h)

You will be picked up at the hotel and driven to the ruins of Tambo Colorado. The site is built of adobe, clay bricks, and dates back to the year 1480. Most probably, it was used by the Inca as an administrative center. It consists of a ceremonial square with the main temple and various other buildings being chambers and baths.

The route of Pisco in Ica (3h)

You will be picked up at the hotel and start your tour through the route of Pisco. You will visit a winery and a Pisco bodega. You will learn the whole procedure to get our Pisco and will also learn about the different kinds of Pisco we have and which cocktails you can prepare with each one. You will also have the chance to taste different kinds of Piscos and purchase liquid souvenirs for your loved ones back home.

Archaeological tour in Nasca from Nasca (3h)

You will be picked up at the hotel and start with an excursion to the most important archaeological sites in Nasca. The beginning is the visit of Museum Antonini with its collection of original textiles of the early Nasca period. Later, you go to the aqueducts of Cantalloc that date back to 300 b.C. With the ruins of Paredones, a pre-Incan temple you end the trip into the past.

Excursion to the Necropolis of Chauchilla from Nasca (2h)

You will be picked up at the hotel and drive to the 30km away from Nasca situated cemetery called Chauchilla. You have to leave the Panamericana Highway towards the mountains in order to get to it. In the middle of the very dry desert, human skeletons have been preserved perfectly. Unfortunately, most of its offerings being jewelry and pottery have been suffered from sacking but nevertheless, it is an impressive site.