

# Northern delights

Northern Peru has long lived in the shadow of the south, but it boasts plenty of its own treasures, discovers **Steph Dyson**

Home to archaeological monuments centuries older than Machu Picchu, the region of Peru that sits between Lima to the south and Ecuador to the north makes for a sustainable and less-touristed alternative or addition to a trip to Cusco and the Sacred Valley – as well as a compelling two-destination trip with Ecuador.

## TRUJILLO

lying on the coast just a 75-minute flight north of Lima, Trujillo is known as the 'City of Eternal Spring' thanks to a pleasant, year-round climate. But elegant colonial streets and a wealth of pre-Columbian archaeological sites are the region's real draw.

Start with a walking tour of the colourful historic city centre, with its restored 16th-century mansions and mustard-coloured cathedral. Next on the agenda is a visit to the largest adobe city in the Americas, 8th-century Chan Chan, which lies north of Trujillo. A day trip can end with ceviche at one of the many restaurants in coastal-village-turned-tourist-playground Huanchaco, or a short ride on a *caballito* – a traditional reed raft that's been used by local fishermen for more than 3,000 years.

South of Trujillo, a guided tour of Huaca de la Luna and Huaca del Sol is a fantastic introduction

to the Mochica, a culture that inhabited the area from the first century to around AD700. A tour of these two vast ceremonial pyramids reveals fantastical murals depicting the grizzly sacrifice rituals employed to satisfy the gods.

On Trujillo's main square, the Costa del Sol Trujillo Centro hotel partnered with international chain Wyndham Hotels in 2018 and is the city's most modern choice. Its 73 bedrooms – many with pretty wooden balconies overlooking the square – are dotted throughout a restored colonial mansion, and guests have access to spa facilities, an outdoor pool and a restaurant serving traditional Trujillo cuisine. Wyndham's newer property, Costa del Sol Wyndham Trujillo, is closer to the airport and features modern bedrooms with a pool or patio view. Doubles for both properties cost from \$85 per night, room-only. [wyndhamhotels.com](http://wyndhamhotels.com)

## CHACHAPOYAS

Lodged into the lush cloud forest of the Amazonas region, the inland market town of Chachapoyas has risen to fame for its access to ancient sites pertaining to the Chachapoya culture. The closest airport is Jaén, which is reached by a direct 105-minute flight from Lima; all of the region's

Chan Chan ruins, Trujillo  
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