

The Incas

Around the same time that the Aztecs were controlling the majority of Central America, the Incas were ruling an empire along the Pacific coast of South America. Their empire was even larger than the Aztec empire. While the Incas had no writing system, they had a highly organized empire.

The Incas built curving roads through the cliffs and valleys of the Andes Mountains. They actually built over fourteen thousand miles of roadways. In some cases, these paths were connected by rope bridges and tunnels.

The Incas lived in an area that was filled with oceans and mountains. There were areas of vegetation and areas of rocky sparseness. The variety of this landscape allowed them to fish on the coast, raise llamas and alpacas in the valleys, and grow crops. They also terraced the mountainsides.

Potatoes actually came from the Andes Mountains. The Incas learned how to irrigate the dry areas by using canals, which helped them grow more crops. Additional crops were then able to be stored in warehouses.

The Incas were also skilled stonemasons. Because their walls were built so well, some of their walls still exist. Today, walls are frequently built using mortar. The Incas were able to build sturdy walls without even using mortar, which is why their walls are so remarkable. The Incas shaped stones so that they fit together exactly. In fact, the stones fit together so tightly that a sharp knife cannot even pass through the cracks in the walls.

For the Incas, stones had sacred meanings. The Incas believed that god created humans out of stone. They also believed that some of their ancestors had turned back into stone.

The Incas worshipped the sun, which they called Inti. Inti was considered to be their main god.

When leaders of the Incan empire died, their bodies were preserved and kept in palace homes. During harvest times, the mummies were brought out. The mummies were then given seats of honor and were offered food along with everyone else.

Incan history can be traced back to 1200 C.E., but the fullness of their empire really began in 1438. At this time, the Incas were ruled by Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui. When someone had the word “Inca” in their name, it was believed that the person was a divine being – a descendent of the gods. Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui dominated the trade routes in the area and also conquered neighboring tribes.

Name _____

Date _____

The Incas (Cont'd)

Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui was responsible for turning a small domain, which was based in Cuzco, into a large empire. This empire included more than one thousand miles. This area was in what is now known as Ecuador and part of Chile.

Stories of the Incan empire caused Francisco Pizarro, a Spanish conquistador, to come to South America. His goal was to conquer the Incan empire and convert the Incan people to Christianity. Pizarro successfully conquered the Incan empire. One of the reasons why Pizarro was able to overpower the Incas was the fact that the Incas were also having a civil war at the same time.

Name _____

Date _____

The Incas Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. For the Incas, these had sacred meanings:
 - a. potatoes
 - b. stones
 - c. trees
 - d. arrows
2. The Incan sun god was named:
 - a. Pacha
 - b. Inca
 - c. Inti
 - d. Marie
3. The Incas built curving roads through the cliffs and valleys of the:
 - a. Andes Mountains
 - b. Rocky Mountains
 - c. Ural Mountains
 - d. Appalachian Mountains

True or False:

- ____ 4. The Incan empire was smaller than the Aztec empire.
- ____ 5. The Incas were skilled stonemasons.
- ____ 6. When someone had the word "Inca" in their name, it was believed that the person was unlucky.
- ____ 7. In 1438, the Incas were ruled by Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui.

Fill Ins:

8. _____ successfully conquered the Incan empire.
9. The Incas lived in an area that was filled with _____ and mountains.

Name _____

Date _____

The Incas Answers

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T 5. The Incas were skilled stonemasons.

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T 7. In 1438, the Incas were ruled by Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui.

Fill Ins:

8. _____ **Francisco Pizarro** _____ successfully conquered the Incan empire.

9. The Incas lived in an area that was filled with ___ **oceans** ___ and mountains.