The site of Machu Picchu represents a masterpiece of art, architecture, and engineering in perfect harmony with nature and is the most the most well-known legacy of the Inca civilization. It was abandoned during the second half of the sixteenth century; it was never lost, however, as it was occasionally visited and inhabited by local farmers. Some colonial documents refer to the site as "the Settlement of the Incas" or the "Old Village of the Inca Named Guanayacucho." In 1784, the names "Machu Picchu" and "Huayna Picchu" appear for the first time in a cartographic document, which was prepared by engineer Hernán Birú. In 1911, Hiram Bingham, a professor at Yale University, visited the site and was impressed by its beauty and majesty. The following year he returned with a multidisciplinary team of professionals who conducted excavations and research in the area.

ON-SITE MUSEUM (Opening hours: 09:00 to 16:00 h.)

The "Manuel Chávez Ballón" on-site Museum of Machu Picchu was inaugurated in the late 1950's and has since contributed to the diffusion of knowledge about pre-Hispanic societies that developed in the ANDES. Also, it allows visitors to understand, in a more comprehensive manner, the meaning of the site of Machu Picchu and the Inca civilization.

1. MAIN GATE
The Incas architects designed the visitor's main entry to the site of Machu Picchu Mountain, one of the most important buildings in the site. The structure's trapezoidal shape is a hallmark of Inca architecture.

2. SUN TEMPLE
The temple is one of the best examples of organic architecture in the world and one of the finest in the Andes. The lower level contains a stepped symbol, a tular sculpture, and trapezoidal niches that were used for ceremonial purposes related to the cult of the dead. In the top level, trapezoidal niches can be found, along with a large carved rock altar and trapezoidal windows that were astronomical observation points.

3. HOUSE OF THE INCas
This compound is strategically located close to the first water faucets (ojoques) and the Temple of the Sun. It has two entrances and served as a temporary residence for the emperor or his representative. The room courtyard contains a set of architectural elements associated with the state religion.

4. WATER FOUNTAINS
There are 16 water fountains located in the urban zone. They display similar design features and construction techniques; however, each is unique.

5. GRANITE CHAOS
The fractured rocks and partially worked granite blocks in this area were still in the process of being worked. The area was still being used as a quarry at the time the site was abandoned. It suggests what the site may have looked like during the construction of the site.

6. SACRED ROCK
This granite block, which is in the process of being ground down, is surrounded by an altar for the worship of sacred mountains. It is located between the central area of the site of Machu Picchu Mountain.

7. HOUSE OF THE INCas
This compound is named for its symmetrical design of the sector's three main (architectural) units. Each main unit has two access points that feature a double-trapezoidal doorway, each with a similar distribution of angular blocks around an open central patio. The sector was a residential area for high-ranking elite.

8. WATER MIRRORS
This building, located in the compound by the same name, was designed for astronomical observation using the water mirrors that are at floor level in the central part of the room to reflect celestial phenomena.

9. CONDOR TEMPLE
The temple is at the center of a large ceremonial area where there is a representation of the condor spreading its wings. The complexity of this temple is evidenced by the presence of underground passageways related to the worship of water.
HISTORIC SANCTUARY OF MACHUPICCHU
NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF MACHUPICCHU (HSM-NAPM)

The HSM-NAPM is a natural and cultural area inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. Covering 37,302 hectares (92,175 acres), it is one of the most biologically wealthy areas in Peru and contains more than 60 archaeological sites linked by a complex Inka road network.

Since the 1930s, the Peruvian government has been promoting the research, conservation, and protection of the cultural (Ministry of Culture) and natural (Ministry of Environment) heritage of the HSM-NAPM for being one of the most important areas of the country and where tourism is developed in a sustainable way.

INKA ROAD NETWORK (IRN)

The IRN of HSM-NAPM is part of the Qhapaq Ñan, a complex system of pre-Hispanic roads that had a transregional integrative function. It acquired its maximum expression during the Inka period and it shows the elevated technological degree reached by Andean civilizations.

In the HSM-NAPM, there are 42 sections covering an area of approximately 300 km. The enormous effort employed for the construction, habitation, and maintenance of these roads—which interconnect all the archaeological monuments and are adapted to the area geomorphology—was part of a state policy of control and connection between the Andes and the Amazon.

BIODIVERSITY

The HSM-NAPM is one of the most biodiverse areas in Peru, it harbors 24 Andean and Amazonian ecosystems, from the humid montane forests at 1900 masl to the peaks of more than 6000 masl. This highly rugged geography allows the existence of ideal habitats for wildlife, including 75 species of mammals, 444 of birds, 14 of amphibians, 24 of reptiles and 377 of butterflies; in addition to 423 species of orchids and 332 of trees, among o’chuqa, impala, cedrela, cedrela planton, uncu and tara.