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Machu Picchu

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Abstract

Suggested readings for the Penn Alumni Travel trip to Machu Picchu. See the Library Guide for this bibliography [here](#).

Keywords

machu picchu, peru, bibliography, penn, alumni, travel, guidebooks

Disciplines

Latin American Languages and Societies | Latin American Literature

Comments

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Alumni Travel Bibliography
Machu Picchu

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Machu Picchu (“old pyramid or mountain” in Quechua) is an archaeological site located in the Cusco region, Urubamba province, in Peru. It is often referred to as the “Lost City of the Incas.” The Inca built the royal estate around 1450, but abandoned it a century later at the time of the Spanish conquest. It was brought to international attention in 1911 by the American historian (and later Governor of Connecticut and US Senator) Hiram Bingham. Machu Picchu has since become an important tourist attraction, and perhaps the most familiar icon of Inca civilization. By 1976, thirty percent of Machu Picchu had been restored, and the restoration work continues to this day.

Since the site was not known to the Spanish during their conquest, it is highly significant as a relatively intact cultural site. Machu Picchu was declared a Peruvian Historical Sanctuary in 1981 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983. In 2007, Machu Picchu was voted one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in a global Internet poll.

Machu Picchu is vulnerable to threats from a variety of sources. While natural phenomena like earthquakes and weather systems can play havoc with access, the site also suffers from the pressures of modern tourism. Preservation of the area's cultural and archaeological heritage is an ongoing concern. Most notably, the removal of cultural artifacts by the Bingham expeditions in the early twentieth century gave rise to a long-term dispute between the government of Peru and the custodian of the artifacts, Yale University.

Suggested Readings

Guidebooks

Adams, Mark. 2011. *Turn Right at Machu Picchu: Rediscovering the Lost City One Step at a Time*. New York: Dutton. 333 p. University Museum Library F3429.1.M3 A43 2011.

What happens when an unadventurous adventure writer tries to re-create the original expedition to Machu Picchu? The author set out to retrace the explorer's dangerous path in search of the truth; except he'd written about adventure far more than he'd actually lived it. In fact, he'd never even slept in a tent. *Turn Right at Machu Picchu* is Adams' humorous account of his journey through some of the world's most majestic and remote landscapes guided only by a hard-as-nails Australian survivalist.

Wright, Ruth M. 2008. *Machu Picchu Revealed*. Boulder: Johnson Books. 1 v. University Museum Library F3429.1.M3 W76 2008.

Jaw-droppingly photographic journey through the architecture, art, and design of Machu Picchu.

Wright, Ruth M., and Alfredo Valencia Zegarra. 2004. *The Machu Picchu Guidebook: A Self-Guided Tour*. Boulder: Johnson Books. 188 p. University Museum Library F3429.1.M3 W75 2004.

"Wright and Zegarra (both anthropologists) have teamed up to produce a handy book for visitors who wish to guide themselves at their own pace through the site. An archaeological map of Machu Picchu keyed to the book's chapters and an array of black-and-white as well as color photographs will help to navigate the site easily."

Biographies of Hiram Bingham

Bingham, Alfred. 2000. *Explorer of Machu Picchu: Portrait of Hiram Bingham*. 2 ed. Greenwich, CT: Triune Books. 381 p. University Museum Library F3429.B633.B55 2000.

Written by his son, Alfred M. Bingham, this biography conveys the curious personality of Hiram Bingham, rediscoverer of Machu Picchu. The son and grandson of New England missionaries in the Pacific, Bingham rebelled against the piety and poverty of his church background, and chose instead an academic career and married an heiress, a grand-daughter of the founder of Tiffany and Co. His overnight acquisition of great wealth opened many opportunities to Bingham. The Tiffany money helped support five expeditions, one of which led to Machu Picchu and a prominent political career. This book chronicles Bingham's explorations and achievements, as well as some of his more questionable actions.

Heaney, Christopher. 2010. *Cradle of Gold: The Story of Hiram Bingham, A Real Life Indiana Jones, and the Search for Machu Picchu*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 285 p. University Museum Library F3429.B633.H42 2010.

In this sweeping narrative, Heaney takes the reader into the heart of Peru's past to relive the story of the final years of the Inca empire, the recovery of their final cities and the fight over their future. Heaney vividly portrays both a stunning landscape and the complex history of a fascinating region that continues to inspire awe and controversy.

Nonfiction

Bingham, Hiram. 2002. *Lost City of the Incas: The Story of Machu Picchu and Its Builders*. Hugh Thomson, ed. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 274 p. University Museum Library F3429.1.M3.B616 2002.

Bingham's book, originally written in the 1940s, details his adventures in finding Machu Picchu. This is a good adventure book and details the last years of the Inca empire before Francisco Pizarro destroyed it. The second half of the book details Bingham's theories, some of which have been proven false.

Bingham, Hiram. 1930. *Machu Picchu: A Citadel of the Incas: Report of the Explorations and Excavations Made in 1911, 1912, and 1915 Under the Auspices of Yale University and the National Geographic Society*. New Haven: National Geographic Society; Yale University Press. 244 p. University Museum Library F3429.1.M3 B617 1930.

Account by Hiram Bingham of the rediscovery and excavation of Machu Picchu.

Burger, Richard, and Lucy Salazar. 2004. *Machu Picchu: Unveiling the Mystery of the Incas*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 230 p. University Museum Library F3429.1.M3 M33 2004.

A beautifully illustrated and definitive guide to the treasures of Machu Picchu. Leading scholars discuss the site's place within the Inca empire, the mysteries surrounding its establishment and abandonment, and the discoveries made there since Bingham's excavations.

Reinhard, Johan. 2007. *Machu Picchu: Exploring an Ancient Sacred Center*. 4 ed. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA. 188 p. University Museum Library F3429.1.M3 R44 2007.

Fiction

Wilson, Carter. 1981. *Treasures on Earth*. New York: Knopf. 243 p. LIBRA
PS3573.I4568.T7 1981.

Fictional account of Bingham's 1911 Yale Peruvian Expedition and the rediscovery of Machu Picchu. In 1911 young Willie Hickler, already an accomplished photographer joins the historic expedition that will lead to the discovery of Machu Picchu in the Peruvian Andes. While the explorers search for the "lost" city and the acclaim that will certainly follow, Willie searches for love with Ernesto Mena, the expedition's Handsome Peruvian guide.