


PERU • SLEEPS

### 8 characterful stays in Cusco, Peru

Opulent mansions and majestic monasteries have been converted into hotels that reflect the Peruvian city's dual role as Inca capital and Spanish imperial hub

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 Link copied!

The Palacio del Inka (@Jason Dewey 2018/Marriott)

## 1. JW Marriott El Convento



El Convento is One of Cusco's grandest hotels (marriott.com)

The lobby of El Convento is staffed by the most welcoming team, but it's the shimmering artwork paying homage to the Inca sun god Inti, made from 76,500 Swarovski crystals, that's most likely to get your attention. One of Cusco's largest and grandest hotels, El Convento doubles as a bona fide museum, and has been designed to showcase the Augustinian cloister and Incan foundations that lie around and beneath the current edifice. Beautiful flower arrangements and rotating contemporary Peruvian artworks complete the experience. The décor in the 153 rooms is sober and understated, with dark hardwood floors. The Quespi restaurant serves dashing versions of classic Peruvian tiraditos (saucier ceviche) and causas (savory layer cake) and there's a pool, steam room and sauna available exclusively to guests, as are yoga sessions, market tours and pisco sour classes.

**More information:** From £224pn; [marriott.com](https://www.marriott.com)

## 2. Monasterio Belmond



Luxury beds in the Belmond (Helen Cathcart/Belmond)

If the original residents of this 16th-century seminary shunned worldly luxuries, they could at least feast their eyes on the architecture. The stonework and terracotta tiling ooze history and an arcaded central patio, vaulting 300 year-old cedar tree, manicured gardens and gilded chapel make for a romantic setting, while the 122 rooms and suites are decorated with colonial-era furniture. Two restaurants, Illariy and El Tupay, serve Peruvian-Mediterranean fusion dishes that use Sacred Valley produce; an al fresco dinner, with candlelight, is a memorable affair. For those ailing due to Cusco's high altitude, there are even oxygen-enhanced rooms to help revive you.

From £267pn; [belmond.com](http://belmond.com)

### 3. Inkaterra La Casona



The stunning Inkaterra La Casona (Inkaterra.com)



boutique hotel, awash with Spanish-era furniture, fine art and antiques. The five balcony and four patio suites overlook an arcaded courtyard, while two plaza suites face on to Plazoleta de las Nazarenas. The restaurant, which preserves the original stone walls, does salads and empanadas, roast guinea pig and Andean trout.

**More information:** From £325pn; [inkaterra.com](http://inkaterra.com)

## 4. El Mercado



The El Mercado is a mixture of hipster and trendy (El Mercado)

This hotel's convivial feel might lead you to wonder if the spiritual memory of the market that used to occupy this three-storey colonial building – three blocks from Cusco's Plaza de Armas – somehow lives on. But the trick is mainly down to Peruvian designer Jordi Puig, who's given an already lovely setting of tiled roofs, wooden balconies and handsome inner patio a contemporary makeover that's inflected by the patterns and hues of Sacred Valley textiles. The 32 rooms are also a mix of traditional and trendy, with wicker baskets, distressed paintwork and bold artworks. The restaurant, La Taberna, is great for simple corn and quinoa-based dishes and salads made from vegetables sourced in the local San Pedro market.

**More information:** From £240pn; [elmercadocusco.com](http://elmercadocusco.com)

## 5. Palacio del Inka



The Palacio del Inka (@Jason Dewey 2018/Marriott)

If you've ever stayed in one of Spain's grander *paradores* (stately homes), you might have *déjà vu* at this Marriott Luxury Collection property. The sprawling ranch-like residence, which once housed no less a personage than Gonzalo Pizarro, brother of conquistador número uno Francisco, has an undeniable Iberian quality. Stone archways, courtyards and painted balconies create a wonderful play of colour, light and shade, and the many portraits and ceramics that adorn the corridors and public areas contribute to the feeling of visiting a functioning manor house. Guest rooms keep up the opulent theme, with walls painted ochre and amber, wine-coloured drapes and huge gilt-framed mirrors. The Inti Raymi restaurant serves fine breakfasts and sophisticated lunches, with dinners prepared using local Andean ingredients out on the patio. With the Santo Domingo church outside the door and views of the Coricancha from upper floors, you couldn't be better located.

**More information:** From £155pn; [marriott.com](http://marriott.com)

## 6. Tierra Viva Cusco San Blas



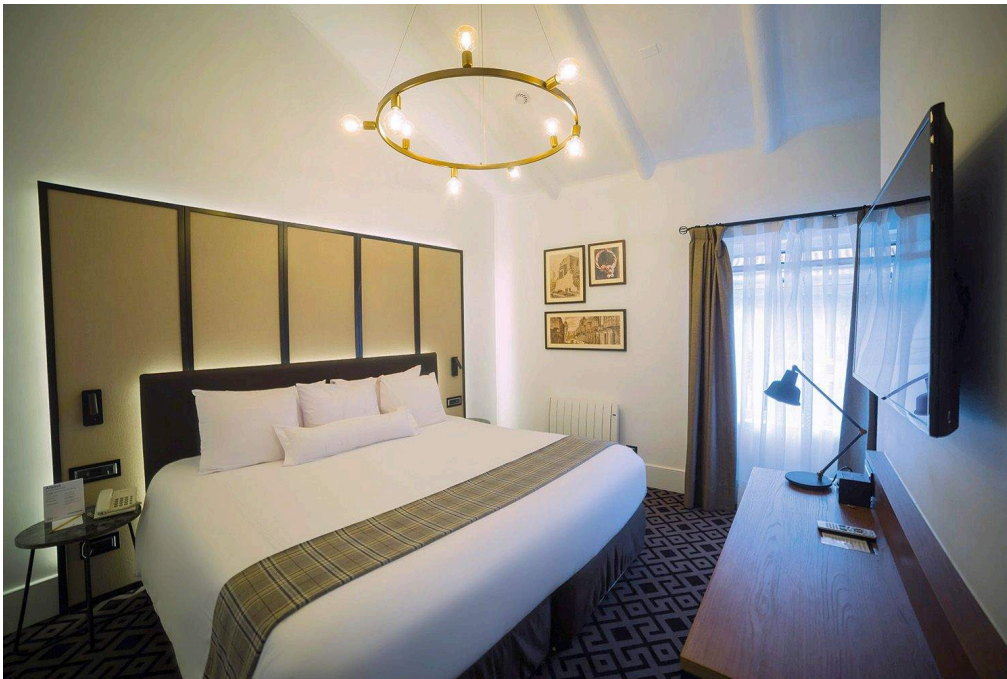
San Blas has a hipster feel to the area (Adrian Portugal/tierravivahoteles.com)



terracotta roof tiles and airy central court. Religious art adorns the lobby and breakfast area and rustic throws and wall hangings brighten up the 24 plainly decorated bedrooms. This is a great good-value option, drawing a mixed crowd of tour groups, backpackers and budget-conscious adventure travellers.

**More information:** From £43pn; [tierravivahoteles.com](http://tierravivahoteles.com)

## 7. Casa Andina Premium



The hotel has 93 rooms ([casa-andina.com](http://casa-andina.com))

Four blocks from the main Plaza de Armas, on the quieter Plaza Limacpampa Chico, this hotel spreads its 93 rooms and public areas over a series of beautiful, stone-floored open-air patios, featuring fountains and areas for lounging and cocktail-sipping, and inner sanctums decorated with oil paintings and furniture typical of Peru's Republican era. Masonry from the original 17th century and Inca carvings peek through the modern refurb at every turn, while evocative sepia-toned photographs and wall-art inspired by Inca motifs add dashes of colour to the white, pared-down guest rooms. Alma, the in-house restaurant, does local stews and soups using native potato varieties and alpaca meat and ceviches with Andean trout.

**More information:** From £67pn; [casa-andina.com](http://casa-andina.com)

## 8. El Retablo



Quirky bedroom in El Retablo (El Retablo)

This quirky 17-room boutique property takes its inspiration from the traditional coloured boxes containing figurines depicting religious scenes and folk tales, which you see in houses across Peru. Rooms are hand-painted by artisans from the Fine Arts School of Cusco in vivid colours and swirling forms, with throws and cushions to match. There's a lovely courtyard to relax in (even here the stonework is decorated) and a cheery breakfast room where puffed quinoa and other local grains are served, as well as crêpes and great coffee. There are drinks, a happy hour and live music events. While there's no in-house dining, the location, three blocks from the main plaza, mean guests have an ample choice of restaurants nearby.

**More information:** From £72pn; [elretablo.com](http://elretablo.com)



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