

# TOP 8 LOST CITIES OF THE WORLD



Throughout the ages, inquisitive travelers have always been fascinated by the mystery attached to the lost cities of past civilizations. Tourism-review.com introduces eight of the ancient world's most fascinating cities.

## **Tikal, Guatemala**

Accommodating between 100,000 and 200,000 inhabitants, Tikal was the largest Mayan city between 200 and 900 AD. However, with the city approaching its peak population, it suffered from massive erosion and deforestation leading to a huge population loss between 830 and 950 AD. Shortly after, Tikal's central authority also collapsed. With the city almost deserted after 950 AD, the remaining populace survived in huts among the remnants of the ruins. During the 10th and 11 centuries, the city was gradually abandoned entirely with the Guatemalan rainforest claiming the ruins for the next one thousand years.

## **Machu Picchu, Peru**

Discovered in 1911 by the Hawaiian historian Hiram, Machu Picchu is, arguably, the world's most famous lost city. Hidden for several centuries above the Urubamba Valley, Machu Picchu was watered by natural springs and flanked by agricultural terraces. Although recognized by locals in Peru, this ancient city remained largely unknown to the outside world until its discovery in 1911.

## **Taxila, Pakistan**

Located in the northwestern part of Pakistan, Taxila was home to the legendary Persian King Darius the Great in 518 BC up until 326 BC when it was conquered by Alexander the Great. Afterwards, it was ruled by a succession of conquerors eventually emerging as a prominent Buddhist center. This ancient city is also mentioned in the Bible by the apostle Thomas who reputedly traveled there during the 1st century AD. The prosperity of Taxila is attributed to its location at the heart of three vital ancient trade routes whose decline led to the city's insignificance. Eventually, it was destroyed by the Huns in the 5th century.

## **Caral, Peru**

The lost city of Caral is undoubtedly one of the most ancient lost cities across America. Inhabited between 2600 BC and 2000 BC and with a population of over 3,000, Caral was one of the largest cities of the Norte Chico civilization. A unique characteristic of this city is that it featured a large central public area that was surrounded by platforms or stone circles. Such designs inspired other lost cities around the Supe Valley region.

## **Skara Brae, Orkney**

Located on the island of Orkney, Skara Brae is one of the best preserved Stone Age villages in Europe and was only discovered in 1850 after getting exposed by a powerful storm. Having been

covered by sand dunes for hundreds of years, its stone walls remain relatively well preserved as the dwellings were filled by sand soon after they were deserted. The city was conquered between 3180 BC and 2500 BC but was abandoned by inhabitants when the area began experiencing climatic changes resulting in an increase in cold and wet weather.

## **Pompeii, Italy**

In existence over two thousand years ago, the city of Pompeii experienced a cataclysmic end when Mount Vesuvius erupted on August 24, 79 AD. Every living and non-living thing present at the time became frozen in time. Excavations in the 18th century, however, unearthed this lost city along with Herculaneum which was also decimated thus providing insights into the lives of the people who once lived there.

## **Chan Chan, Peru**

Constructed by Chimu around 850 AD and in existence until 1470 AD when it was conquered by the Incas, Chan Chan was the biggest city in pre-Columbian America. The city had around 30,000 inhabitants and comprised several walled citadels which served as ceremonial rooms, temples and burial chambers. Patterned relief arabesques adorned buildings whose walls were made using adobe brick.

## **Great Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe**

Spanning a huge area in modern day Zimbabwe, Great Zimbabwe denotes a complex of stone remnants from which the country adopted its name. Built by the Bantu people around the 11th century, this lost city was home to around 18,000 inhabitants. Great Zimbabwe is to be differentiated from hundreds of other small ruins known as Zimbabwees that were scattered across the rest of the country. In existence for over 300 years, Great Zimbabwe's decline was precipitated by among others political turmoil, downfall in trade, and climatic changes that resulted in famine and water shortages.

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