

Ambition Unbound

After centuries as a growing local power, the Inca dreamed of a greater realm. They went on to conquer 300,000 square miles in a few generations.

1 ca 1400

Having subdued their neighbors, Inca kings launch their first conquests beyond the Cusco region.

2 ca 1470

Pushing to the coast, the Inca defeat the Chimú Empire and carry off many Chimú artisans.

3 ca 1500

Turning south, the Inca capture a vast territory, extending their reach to the edge of Patagonia.

4 ca 1532

In a final thrust along the eastern slope of the Andes, the Inca expand farther into the Amazon Basin.

Area of Discovery

THE INCA EMPIRE

Employing a shrewd combination of diplomacy, intermarriage, and military coercion, the Inca conquered a vast realm extending 2,500 miles along the mountainous spine of South America. At their height, they ruled as many as 12 million people, who spoke at least 20 languages. This fractious conglomerate quickly fell apart after the Spanish conquest in 1532.

