



## Francisco Pizarro: Explorer

Francisco Pizarro (1478-1541) was a Spanish conquistador who traveled through much of the Pacific coast of America along Peru. He "discovered" the Incan empire and conquered it brutally and quickly, stealing immense hoards of gold, silver, and other treasures.

Pizarro landed at San Mateo Bay in 1532. After traveling through desert and snow-capped mountains, Pizarro and his men (who included [Hernando de Soto](#)) arrived at Cajamarca (in 1533), where they captured Atahualpa, the 13th and last emperor of the Incas. Atahualpa had just won a civil war against his half-brother (Huáscar), and had executed Huáscar and his family. Atahualpa had invited Pizarro to a celebratory feast, thinking that the Spanish were not much of a threat. Pizarro ambushed Atahualpa and killed thousands of his men. Atahualpa offered a huge ransom for his own release, but Pizarro took the treasure and had Atahualpa strangled on Aug. 29, 1533; this was the end of the Incan empire.

After looting and generally destroying the Incan capital of Cusco, Pizarro founded Lima (which he called Ciudad de los Reyes, which means "City of the Kings"). Pizarro was assassinated in Lima, Peru, in 1541, by followers of Pedro de Almagro (Cortes' captain) who wanted to seize Lima for its riches.

