

# A Millennial Celebration

## INTI RAYMI



- 1 Before Viceroy Toledo in 1572 banned the ceremonial events which occurred each Winter Solstice in Cusco, the native residents gathered to honor the Sun God, sacrifice an animal to ensure good crops and to pay homage to the Inca. Following the edict, the ceremonies were performed in secret.
- 2 Today, it's the second largest festival in South America (after Rio's Carnival) where thousands of people (among tourists and residents) celebrate the Inti Raymi, the Festival of the Sun.
- 3 During the entire week there are events, from daytime expositions, street fairs, and parades to people dancing in the streets. In the evenings,
  - 4 The centerpiece of the celebrations is on June 24. The Sacsayhuaman fortress receives thousands of people, where more than 500 actors bring to life the worship of the Inti or sun god, personified by the Inca.
  - 5 The Inti Raymi celebration begins early in the morning when a choir of aqllas, or the Inca's chosen ones, recreate their homage to the sun with their songs and dances on one of the platforms of the Koricancha temple, in Cusco. They later move onto the Inca fortress Sacsayhuaman to continue staging the Inti Raymi, when the Inca displays his dominion until the setting of the sun.
  - 6 The actors bring the principal characters to life such as the Inca, Willak Umu or Highest Priest, chaskis, messengers, aqllas among others. With a great display of music, songs and dances the Inca ascends his Usnu or throne and initiates the ceremonies which culminates in a salute to the four suyos of the Inca world. During all the celebrations there are several rituals and ceremonies as the sacrificial killing of a llama. This is a traditional form of offering to the native gods.
  - 7 The fundamental part of the Inti Raymi is when the Highest Priest foretells the future of the Inca and the Empire by reading the blood stains of the sacrificed llama.

### Before reading

- Do you know anything about the Festival of the Sun?

### 1. Read about the festival and find the answers to these questions.

- Where and when does the celebration take place?
  - When did it start?
  - Was it a religious celebration?
  - Why was the Inti Raymi an important celebration?
  - What happens nowadays in the city during the week of the Inti Raymi?
  - Where does the main ceremony take place? How long does it last?
  - How many people participate in the theatrical representation?
  - Which traditional ritual is performed during the ceremony and what meaning does it have?
2. A word that has the same origin or that is related in some way to a word in another language is called a cognate.  
Example: ceremony, event.  
**In pairs identify the cognates in the text and share your list with your classmates.**

### 3. Read the text and find words or phrases to match the definitions below.

#### Paragraph 1

- to show respect or honour towards someone or something
- agricultural produce
- prohibited

#### Paragraph 3

- attracts

#### Paragraph 4

- adoration

#### Paragraph 5

- exhibit

#### Paragraph 6

- make lifelike

#### Paragraph 7

- predict



### 4. Discuss

- Would you like to go to the Inti Raymi?
- What do all Peruvians also celebrate on this day?
- Why is it important to commemorate celebrations like the Inti Raymi?
- What traditional celebrations are there in your town?