

## Incas Gender [Edited]

The Inca culture recognized the female and male genders only. There were different roles among the two genders, but both were expected to distribute an equal amount of work to ensure the *ayllus* (the large family groups in which they lived) functioned efficiently.

The Inca men usually wore their hair long at the back and had bangs in the front. The Inca women had long hair which they wore in braids, which they either wore down or wrapped around their heads.

The Inca children were expected to be extremely compliant and never complain. They were washed in freezing cold water and often left out in their cradles on cold nights; they were brought up to be tough. The young boys were taught to look after animals, collect firewood, and scare away pest in the field. Meanwhile, the young girls were taught to help their mother with the younger children as well as how to cook and weave.

The Sapa Inca thought that too much education was not good; therefore, most children did not attend school. However, some boys from noble families studied religion, poetry, math, and history.

The initiation ceremony for boys took place when they were around 14 years of age. This ceremony marks when a boy becomes a man and takes on new work in his family. The ceremony consisted of the boy getting his legs whipped hard by all the elders of his *ayllus*. Another ceremony that teen boys go through is called the feast of *Capa Raymi*. A group of teenage boys spend several nights on a freezing mountain top learning the legends of their ancestors, from there they go to Cuzco to perform a special dance, and then race each other up and down four different mountains. This last for 21 days and the boys who have survived are dressed in nice clothing and get their ears split along with golden ear plugs, this signifies that they have become an adult.

Men pass into the category of *hatun-runu* or *puric* once they reach age 25, this labels them as “able-bodied” and they are eligible to pay both labor tax and the *mit'a* (which is serving in the army and working on community projects).

Women reached adulthood earlier than men, and were in charge of watching after the household, weaving clothing, and helping on the land the land in which their *ayllus* was responsible for. At the age of 10 an Inca girl was judged on her social rank and beauty. The most beautiful girls were sent away to be trained in becoming an *acllacumas* or “Chosen Women,” while the other girls stayed in the village and learned skills such as spinning, weaving, and cooking. When the “left-out” girls were 12 years old were considered old enough to marry, therefore, a marriage market was held husbands were picked for them.

All boys who were 24 had to attend the ceremony, and once a girl was chosen they were married in a brief ceremony where they held hands and exchanged sandals. From this moment on the woman was classed as a “warriors wife” and raised their family and helped with the farming.

The “Chosen Women” were trained as priestesses and servants to the Sapa Inca... [and called]... *mamaconas*, were considered wives of the Sun God. Once either gender reached age 60, they were expected to perform only the lightest duties, such as gathering firewood and babysitting; they were taken care of by the *ayllus*... Some of these “Chosen Women” were also singled out to be sacrificed, they saw this as a great honor. Other “Chosen Women” were married off to high officials or members of the royal *ayllus*...