



PICA

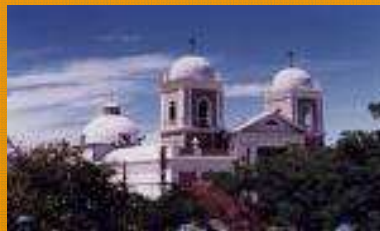


This village, of pre-Hispanic origin, stands at 1,325 meters above sea level, 114 km south-east of Iquique. The land around is planted with a variety of fruits and other plants, such as oranges, lemons, grapefruit and mangoes. They are grown for the production of home-made jams and other similar products.

The village stands on the Inca Road, and it is known that the Spanish discoverer of Chile, Diego de Almagro, passed through this way, and a Spanish settlement soon grew up here. The majority of the houses, businesses and churches date from the Spanish period.

Church of San Andrés

Located in Pica, is the third construction on the same site, the two earlier churches having been built in 1600 and 1768 respectively. The materials used in its construction include iron and wood. It stands on the Plaza de Armas and its high front in classical style, framed between pilasters, features three doors with circular crownings and two bell-towers. It was constructed between 1880 and 1886, and has been declared a National Monument.



Cocha Resbaladero

This natural swimming pool among the rocks is formed by water flowing out of two caves. It lies in the village of Pica, making it a bathing resort, and providing a remarkable experience in a village in the middle of the desert.

The thermal waters rise at a temperature of approximately 32.8°C, and the following types of bath are on offer : thermal pool, individual tub, mud and steam. These springs are ideal for those suffering complaints of the bones and respiratory system. They are open all year round.



Matilla



This is a little village located in an oasis on the eastern edge of the Pampa de Tamarugal, beside the Quebrada de Quisma, at an altitude of 1,160 meters above sea level. It dates from 1760, when a group of townspeople from Pica established the village here. At that time, its principal product was wine, and when the vineyards were destroyed, the village fell into ruin. Some buildings of cultural interest have been restored for tourists to visit.

Church of San Antonio

- The church stands in the village square of Matilla. It was constructed in 1887, after the existing church was destroyed by an earthquake. It is close to Lagar de Mantilla, likewise a National Monument. The style is neo-classical, with some baroque features. It has a stone bell-tower.



Lagar de Matilla



- A wine-producing industry was established here in the first decades of the 18th century. Equipment, big earthenware jars (known as tinajas) and a large press have been preserved. The last vintage was harvested in 1937, after which it fell into disuse. The site has been turned into a museum where explanatory talks are given.