

Introduction and Maps

When we first began to discuss plans for this trip we were planning something very different. We had gone to Central America often; Mexico, Costa Rica and Panama, but not to South America, although Ann had spent time there when she was in her early 20's. We first were planning an Amazon cruise in Brazil, then a visit to the Pantanal and Iguazu Falls. But one place we wanted to stay at the beginning of the trip was in Peru. Ann said that if we were that close to Machu Picchu we needed to go there too. Once we started to investigate that, we found so many interesting things to see and do in Peru that the trip gradually morphed into an all-Peru trip. So there we were, planning for a month in Peru rather than Brazil. And there is so much in Peru that all we covered was southern Peru. We still really want to go to Brazil, but perhaps next year or the year after.

So, for a general orientation on where we went, here is a map of South America and a satellite photo-map of Peru.



A geo-political map of Peru with places we stayed shown on it.



- A** Lima
- B** Puno/Lake Titicaca
- C** Urubamba/Sacred Valley
- D** Machu Picchu
- E** Cusco
- F** Cloud Forest
- G** Flood-plain Forest
- H** Amazon Rain Forest

Monday, August 26 – Lima, but first . . . Travel . . . and MORE travel . . . !

We had a crazy day in Tucson after returning from most of the summer in Chicago (ALL of the summer for Ann). Arrived from Chicago at noon Saturday, had Sunday to finalize everything for Peru, flew out to Lima at 11:00 Monday. Thanks to Ed's planning we were remarkably organized for packing and were ready to go with some time to spare for a last night dinner at the Hub with Ann's friend Sheryle who drove us to the airport next morning. Ann did see her babies, Joyita and Hombrito, our tortoises, but no gray foxes. We had a pair of young gray foxes living in the yard all summer. Ed saw them often when he came home during the summer, and we were both hoping Ann would see them too, but no luck. We hope they are still living in the yard when we return.

And then the ordeal begins . . . 3 flight legs: from Tucson to Dallas – wait – Dallas to Miami – wait – Miami to Lima – then - FINALLY! All stopovers were at least 5 hours long, but the Admiral's Club provided a reasonable place for us to kill time.

We made a wonderful discovery. We were travelling first or business class all the way and discovered that for our last and longest flight, Miami to Lima, we had the new plane that has business class seats that that move just about every which way and lay down flat like a bed. AND wide and long enough for even Ed to be comfortable and actually sleep. He thinks it's the first sleep over 15 minutes that he's had on a plane in the last 30 years. Ann got some good sleep as well and it's a BIG help in arriving in something better than an exhausted state. We arrive in Lima at 4:30 am on Tuesday, August 27th and are met promptly by our arranged pick-up and delivered to Casa Inca hotel in the Miraflores district. Of course we are tired, but not TOOOO tired thanks to some REAL sleep (almost 4 hours) on that long flight from Miami to Lima.

Our first impression of Lima is "pew-yew", just outside the airport it smells like a sewage treatment plant or abattoir. Lima really needs to do something about whatever it is that creates that smell at the airport. We arrive at Casa Inca and thankfully, no smell! We are tired enough that we pile into bed for a couple of hours sleep, without even unpacking. It's still early morning and we wake around mid-day, find some lunch, then take a walk around to explore our area.

Casa Inca hotel

In Lima Doris had booked us at Casa Inca, a small boutique hotel in the Miraflores district, a “safe” and nice, upscale district of Lima. We are only a block from the promenade along the oceanfront, just walk 50 yards to the corner, cross a street and we’re there. Much of Lima is situated on a cliff overlooking the beach, and here across from us the promenade is about 2-300 feet above the sea. A great view whenever we go out for a walk, and a fruit vendors cart right where we cross the street to the promenade.



Tuesday, August 27 – Afternoon walk in Lima

After some quick shut-eye we're refreshed and want to take a walk around. The rest of today we are on our own in Lima. Tomorrow we have a driver and a guide for the day taking us around Lima. We walk along the seafront a little way to a restaurant called Mango that Fabiana, our guide for tomorrow recommended.



<- What to wear in Lima.

Mango is in a large open-air mall, and had the look of a big "chain-type" place, but somehow still managed to be charming. We sat in their patio area right at the cliff-edge overlooking the Pacific.



Ann enjoyed her first Peruvian beer, a Pilsner, dry, dry, dry. Great beer.

Then she ordered Mango's "house" ceviché. It was wonderful with fresh fish, scallops, shrimp, octopus, squid all in a creamy lemon marinade. It wasn't the tiny appetizer we are used to here, but was meal-sized (large meal, in fact).

Ceviché was invented in Peru and we hope to be eating it throughout our trip. This is a strictly "don't drink the water, don't eat raw veggies and most fruit" country. But everyone says to enjoy the marinated fish and we did.



Ed had the buffet (3 trips, we're afraid), lots of good things, including 2 varieties of ceviché, and the first taste of Alpaca, which was outstanding.

The food was excellent as well as the view.



We walked around in the city, up from the seafront to a nice, but small plaza and then back to the seafront by a different route.



The "guy on the building" didn't appear to be an ad. No words, no brands, just street art we guessed.



For the most part, uninspiring city scenes full of bland concrete and glass buildings, although the Plaza was a nice bright spot where we stopped for a sit-down before heading back to Casa Inca.



A Bouganvillea "tree" 15-20 feet tall.



A beautiful old church at the edge of the plaza.



A white cat at the plaza. It was clean and obviously well-cared-for not feral. We saw no feral cats in Lima or anywhere in Peru. In the countryside feral dogs were everywhere, but not in Lima

Surprising to us it is not at all crowded, we checked later and there was no holiday, just the way it is normally. Drivers are sane, parking is orderly, almost no horns sounded in traffic, even in an area we walked through that had major construction and some street closures. In the US the horn blasting would have been deafening. People on the street are small, a beautiful light or medium brown color and many with some Indian facial characteristics and hair, but mostly a true “melting pot” people. Occasionally we see a man or woman who appears completely Indian and we think this will increase as we move to smaller urban areas and the countryside inland.



After some sit-down-time we're ready to head back to Casa Inca. As we walk around we note the lack of trash; Lima is a very clean city in this respect. But everything is terribly dusty, a thick layer. The whole city looks like it could use a good washing. When we later asked Fabiana about it, wondering when the rainy season started, she replied “oh, it never rains in Lima”, and then explained that she wasn't joking. The 2 days we were here (and a 3rd as we left for Juliaca) were cool and foggy near the sea, not so much after we got several blocks inland. Reminded us of San Francisco weather.

We get back at dinner time, but neither of us is the least bit hungry, so we just get some “safe” fruit (bananas and oranges, skin still on) at the vendor's cart and that is fine as a dinner. When we start to unpack, we discover an “illegal” traveling with us from Tucson. A bark scorpion nestled in the bottom of Ann's suitcase. Since the suitcase came with her from Chicago, Mr. Scorpion was obviously nestled in her clothes which Ed had piled on the floor of the sewing room. So far, we have found no family members to join the original in the trash .

Early to bed, snuggled under a thick comforter with the room heater on. It's cold and damp outside with a breeze coming off the Ocean, and we get a good night's sleep.