

Friday, September 13 (OH NO!) – Walking and shopping

We both had bad nights, really our first. Ann had one of those headaches from hell and Ed had a dry, hacking cough, which succeeded in keeping us both awake until he slugged down some Nyquil. This morning, Ann's headache is gone and Ed is enjoying a late sleep . . . and the night cough is much better.

Ann supplements Marta's ample breakfast with limones (from the market here) squeezed into hot water. She is still a little under the weather from the cold she's been fighting. And she's eagerly awaiting our descent to lower altitudes so she can tap the Bombay Sapphire she brought. She thinks that will be her most effective cold medicine.



Another day on our own in Cusco. Today we purchase souvenirs. We taxi to the Market of Handicrafts (there are 3 of these along the Avenieda del Sol which is the main route down to the Plaza Mayor. We have begun with the largest, but every stall has virtually the same things as the one next to it.



What Ann wants for our Tucson home is a Toro de Bolletos. On top of almost all the houses in Cusco, and in fact, everywhere we have been in Peru, there are perched small statues of two bulls joined by a bar above with a variety of symbols, flowers, holy water, cross, grains, etc. These are traditionally given to a couple when they move into a home, and they are mounted on the house to provide blessing and protection. They are ubiquitous, so she wants just one to remind us of our time in Peru. But Ann does manage to find a Toro that she likes, which is good as most of what she finds are pretty unattractive. Guess if they are up on the roof, they don't need fine detail. Something from the Spanish that the natives embraced. And then there are all the little things to purchase for others, Christmas gifts.

Finished at the large crafts market we walk down along Avenieda del Sol into town. It's a bit over mile, and along the way Ann does more shopping (Ed is remarkably patient throughout).



We have some rain along the way but the weather always co-operates by raining hard while we are in a shop, then stopping when we come out to continue our walk. We never actually get “rained on”. There are several pretty little plazuelas and fountains along the way.



It is a nice walk through the “real” Cusco; we see so no other tourists. The entire stretch, perhaps 1½ miles from our apartment down to the Plaza Mayor is what we’d consider a “nice neighborhood” and very safe to walk.



We stop along the way to mail postcards we had purchased earlier. Saw a cute



dog at the entrance to a shop. When we were in Istanbul we noticed that many shops, especially in the bazaars, had “guard cats” stationed at or near the entrances. I suppose here the custom is “guard pups”? But the doggie is not exactly dressed to look intimidating, is it?



There is not that much of interest in the other markets we visit however. The best variety and quality goods are up in San Blas, so that’s where we’re headed.



Again, we “shop our way” first up, then down again. Today there is a good bit of vehicle traffic on the narrow streets up to San Blas. Patience Ed, patience!

We buy gifts for everyone, mostly Chullos, an Andean style of hat with earflaps, made from vicuña, alpaca, llama or sheep's wool. Chullos have been worn in the Andean Mountain region for centuries, long before Spanish times. Wearing different types and colors has a significance among the Andean natives for identifying their clan and station or status. We buy 2 dozen or thereabouts; sizes from tiny, for a Boland infant, to “big-head” sizes for Ed’s sons and Ann’s nephews, and every size in between.



We buy a few different gifts for some people; beautiful cat statues for Ed’s sister Norah and our friend Sandra Burke, both cat people. As well as a friend, Sandra is also our “cat-sitter” when we travel from Chicago, so we think she deserves a nice “kitty gift”. Our luggage was “comfortably” loaded before this buying spree, now it will have its capacity severely tested (it passes, we don’t need to add a bag).

Part way down to the Plaza Mayor from San Blas, we stop for a good lunch at a vegetarian restaurant named *Granja Heidi* run by a couple from Bavaria. It is barely marked, so you have to know exactly where you’re going to have any hope of finding it. Another recommendation from Doris. Kind of what you might call a “Hippie place”, but great food. Soup and quiche for Ed and a pumpkin and rice dish for Ann. A few more stops to complete our shopping and then a taxi home and packing for the final part of our trip, down the Andes eastern slope into the Amazon.



The few things Ann washed have not dried, so the hair drier inserted in a leg or sleeve for 15-20 minutes does the trick. Marta has taken care of a couple of loads of laundry for us so we are well-supplied with clean clothes. We get everything packed (and it all FITS) for tomorrow by late afternoon. We huddle near our trusty (NOT) heater reading for a short while, then have leftovers for an early dinner. Early to bed so as to be ready for Doris at five tomorrow morning.

