



maize

view from the andes

the bi-monthly news sheet from apus peru travel specialists

october 2007



ancascocha trek



train to machu picchu



weaving in the sacred valley



choquequirao hike



paucartambo

WELCOME...

"to our first edition, with early bird specials, and a focus on giving to the less fortunate. You too can give with our Christmas tours or by taking any trek, where 5% of the total trek price goes to our community projects... more on page 2..."

Editorial: How do we live our lives?

After a busy 'winter' high season in Cusco I have returned to a career and family in Australia. I found myself rummaging through my wardrobe, cleaning and tidying and giving loads of things away. Why? I



Ariana with a 'sacra' at the celebrations of Virgen del Carmen at Paucartambo. Going to Peru in July? This is a not to be missed festival!

think it's because in Peru, no one has much at all, even the middle class. When one has been living with their extended family in pretty much cramped conditions, one becomes quite Spartan and austere in their existence. In Peru, I walk everywhere (apart from runs to the Plaza in oh-so-cheap Tico taxis), eat their food which is nearly all prepared by hand with zero fat content, and live within my means. Here, in Australia I walk from my home computer to my car, to my office computer and to the pie shop for lunch and then do the same in reverse at the end of the day. One of my favourite quotes about travel says:

... Travel can mean a lot more than simply a leisure activity. It might form part of a broader philosophical reflection relating to self and nature. It might involve trying to find answers to many of the problems experienced when living in a westernized, industrialized country.

Travel provides a pause or interruption in our lives that causes us to reflect on how we live our lives. So you have received this newsletter because you might be thinking about travelling, or you have travelled to Peru recently.

Cheers, Ariana Svenson, Editor

testimonials...

"Words fail me for many parts of the route. The section between Choquequirao and Salkantay where we had the route almost to ourselves was a particular highlight, but too many other parts stand out to mention them all. There were several highlights in our trip - the breathtaking scenery, the amazing route and a group of people (guides, cooks and trekkers) who couldn't have been more fun to trek with. Kevin, UK, Great Ruins and Real Adventure, August 2007

in this issue:

- editorial: how do we live our lives?
- christmas & new year in peru
- pisco earthquake update
- supporting bilingual education in remote areas
- Choquequirao to Machu Picchu: a truly intense challenge
- Early bird specials

testimonials...

"I really liked how detailed your web site was and even though we didn't actually do any alternative treks or activities their inclusion on the web site gave me a great feeling for your company. It was also very convenient for us that we could choose the departure date since we had a limited time frame. In the end it was wonderful to be a "private" tour" Katrina, USA, Choquequirao, July 07 For more testimonials please see:

<http://www.apus-peru.com/testimonials.htm>

Christmas & New Year in Peru

Enjoy a Christmas and New Year that you will never forget! Christmas and New Year are a time of heady excitement in Cusco. Quechua and Catholic traditions mingle with images of Santa Claus. A distinct aspect of Christmas in Peru is the "charitable chocolatada" where better off people or organisations offer a bit of Christmas cheer to poor children or pensioners. A chocolatada is often organised by churches, businesses or shops and are characterised by giving a cup of hot chocolate, some bread or biscocho sweet bread with dried fruits inside), some sweets or maybe a toy. Apus Peru runs two chocolatadas in two remote communities.

This year Apus Peru is offering two extremely unique and specially designed Christmas tours that truly enable you to experience a Peruvian Christmas and also help people less fortunate than yourself. These can be combined with New Year add ons which will provide an exceptional start to 2008. These are really once in a lifetime experiences!

Reasons to go to Cusco in the festive season

- cultural experiences galore
- fewer tourists
- Lower prices in hotels (ask for a discount!)
- the ability to give at chocolatadas



Papa Noel or Santa Claus with a group of remote villagers during a charitable Chocolatada in 2005

we are best contacted by email! www.apus-peru.com email: apusperu@westnet.com.au



a girl and her dog, chaullacocha

bilingual education in remote communities

As our agency grows 'poco a poco' (little by little) we have been able to develop our community projects. Ariana is close to finishing a Masters in Development studies and is delighted to be able to invest and assist in remote Andean communities in the most sustainable and responsible way possible.

In 2006 the small NGO RUFADA Rural Family Development Association of the Sacred Valley fought to have the government re open the school in the community of Chaullacocha from April through to December. The school had been closed for five years due to a lack of resources, especially teaching staff that declined to live in remote and difficult conditions. The school reopened in 2006 with 22 children in first through fourth grade. By 2007 numbers had swelled to 29 children studying through to fifth grade. RUFADA identified that as the government paid teacher was not bilingual (in Quechua and English) they were unable to communicate with the majority of the children, especially the smaller ones who only speak Quechua. Apus Peru came into the project four months into the school year and now pays the large part of the salary of a bilingual teacher who teaches the younger children.

RUFADA writes: "we are aware that the only way to depart from under development is to give more emphasis in the education of our children and especially the less favoured in remote communities. We hope to gain a pride of our Andean identity and Quechua language while also improving their chances in broader Peruvian society."

Pisco earthquake update

Peru – literally – was badly shaken by the earthquake measuring 8.0 on the Richter scale on the 15 August 2007. The places most affected by the earthquake are Ica, Pisco, Paracas, and Chincha which lie more than 150km to the south east of Lima.

Tourism has returned to normal in Nazca and the Ballestas boat tours have started up again. Statistics at the end of September were as follows (according to Peruvian Government preliminary assessments): 519 dead, 1,366 wounded, 58,581 houses destroyed 13,585 houses affected, 103 hospitals affected, 14 hospitals destroyed.

On September 18th the Ministry of Education (MOE) informed that 786 classrooms are currently in good status, allowing 85% of schools to re-start classes. In addition to this, 131 pre-fabricated modules have been installed. Whereas the second phase of the MOE emergency response will focus on psychosocial assistance to teachers and students, the third phase will aim at redesigning the entire education program in order to recover the wasted time during the remaining academic year.

Source: *Earthquake in Peru: Situation Report No. 19* Source - UN Country Team in Peru Date - 26 Sep 2007

Choquequirao to Machu Picchu: a truly intense challenge!

Visit the mysterious ruins of Choquequirao and end your trek at Machu Picchu!

The premier adventure hike in the region is the 9 day Choquequirao to Machu Picchu which visits these two enigmatic ruins. Ariana Svenson explains: "Back in 2002 I was out at Huancacalle when we met a little old campesino (rural person) He engaged us in a long chat in mixed Quechua and Spanish. I finally understood that these seemingly remote areas are all linked by ancient trails – the Qhapaq Nan of the Incas. This conversation stimulated a 2 year period of exploration as we headed out to the Vilcabamba to explore these crumbling routes. We are not explorers – there were plenty of others that had been before us – but we certainly felt special. You too can get the same feeling on our Choquequirao to Machu Picchu route that leaves once a month or more."

CHECK IT OUT> Great Ruins and Real Adventure - Choquequirao and Machu Picchu http://www.apus-peru.com/greatruins_realadv.htm



moments of serendipity in the awesome andes...

Early bird specials

If you book 6 months before your trip departure we will offer you a 5% discount on the total trek or tour price.

When booking, please note that we are a small family operated company that provides personalised service – we need a minimum of one week to organise your trek (preferably more time!) Please keep in mind that as part of our commitment to responsible tourism at the beginning of each month we program our guides and cooks so that they have a reliable and stable work program.

We are committed to responsible, sustainable and ethical tourism.

Giving Peru style - a response to the Pisco earthquake

In Australia, when there is an emergency, many people give money to their favourite or most trusted charity. Yet in Cusco, nearly everyone in Peru went out and bought rice, sugar and bottled water and then took it to a collection point.

Our family and friends went through our cupboards and cleaned out spare clothing ... One of Apus Peru office staff contributed a nice jacket. I protested to her – "but you wear that jacket all the time, don't give it away." Her response: "The people there need it more than I do." It brought tears to my eyes –she only has maybe 2 jackets and I realised that I, at least, wouldn't want to make sacrifices like that for others. I would just give money – which costs my bank account, but has no cost to me as an individual.