



A Journey in **Sustainable Tourism**



Introduction



The Purpose of this Brochure

The world is changing. An ever-increasing number of people are looking beyond themselves and considering their actions within the larger context of what is good for the planet and its people. The global sustainability movement is growing.

More and more people are concerned about the issues facing the planet. They're acknowledging their actions have consequences, and are taking steps to lessen their impacts and influence positive change. Governments are rethinking policy. Scientists are uncovering innovative solutions. Private industry is taking bold steps, and the media is reporting it all to the world.

As the global sustainability movement becomes increasingly popular and powerful, it will have a massive effect on the travel/tourism industry. Of course, this movement is having a massive effect on the travel/tourism industry. The growth of sustainable tourism is testament to the fact that many of today's travelers understand the impact their visits have on a destination, and want to take responsibility for that. Other industry stakeholders are embracing the tenets of sustainable tourism, as well.

Peru has been committed to advancing sustainable tourism for many years. The

work being done by the government, private enterprise and NGOs here is exemplary in terms of protecting natural resources, preserving cultural heritage and promoting fair and just economic development.

The national government of Peru has historically recognized the significance of our natural resources. Today 17.51% of our country is a natural protected area. Peru boasts 76 Natural Protected Areas, 21 Regional Conservation Areas and 134 Private Conservation Areas (PCAs). These PCAs are especially significant because they exemplify how government and private citizens can successfully work together toward a common goal.

Environmental responsibility is not the only way sustainable tourism is manifesting in Peru. New economic opportunities provided by private enterprises in the tourism industry are helping communities, especially those in remote locations, improve their quality of life, and maintain centuries-old cultural traditions.

There are numerous stories of how Peru and its people are helping to advance, and are benefitting from, sustainable tourism initiatives throughout the country. As the national government tourism office, PROMPERU is pleased to help tell those stories, so that tourism stakeholders in Peru and around the world can celebrate them, and learn from them. That is the purpose of this brochure.

We hope that the stories contained in this brochure will educate, entertain and inspire you, and that together, we can help the sustainable tourism movement continue to advance.

Sustainable Tourism with a Peruvian Accent

Sustainable tourism is all about enjoying authentic cultural and natural experiences, and getting a true sense of a destination and its people. It's a deeper, and a more rewarding experience.

Sustainable tourism is a natural for Peru. Visitors here enjoy a wide array of natural and cultural wonders. From the Andes to the Amazon, the culture of the Incas to that of the Spanish, Peru is rife with sustainable tourism attractions and experiences.

In Peru, there's a deep love and respect for the Earth and its inhabitants that goes back for centuries. The Incas worshiped Pachamama, or Mother Earth. Every Incan feast began with a challa—a toast to Mother Earth, where the first sip of chicha (corn beer) is poured on the ground in gratitude for the meal to come. The reverence for the land extends to all living creatures, which helps explain why Peru is among the most biodiverse countries in the world.

There are over 1,800 species of birds in Peru, which attract eager bird watchers from around the world. Additionally, there are numerous non-profit organizations on the ground in Peru, working to conserve natural resources.

The cultural treasures of Peru are equally impressive. Peru is rich in cultural offerings from its indigenous people in traditional garb to its 3,000 different festivals, from its iconic ancient archaeological sites – such as Caral, the oldest city in the Americas or Chan Chan, the largest adobe brick citadel in the world, and mysterious desert glyphs – the Nazca lines. Beautiful colonial cities bristle with

Waterfall in the amazon. (Photo: Jaime Chávez, PROMPERU)



contemporary energy from cutting-edge artists, designers, architects and, of course, chefs.

Peru is becoming increasingly recognized as the Gastronomic Capital of The Americas. Our unique geography, and rich biodiversity yield a vast variety of ingredients, many of which are native to Peru. Our two ocean currents—El Niño and the Humboldt—produce hundreds of species of fish and seafood, which gave birth to ceviche. And large waves of immigrants—Chinese, Japanese, Africans, and Europeans – enriched our indigenous traditions with new techniques and flavors.

A visit to Peru is an opportunity to witness the sustainability travel movement in action. Peruvian culture and respect for the environment is so well engrained here, it's a day-to-day occurrence, as common—and vital—as the air we breathe.

An Interview With Shannon Stowell

PROMPERU recently sat down with Shannon Stowell, Chief Executive Officer of the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), an industry trade group with over 1,300 members representing 100 countries worldwide. Since re-starting the organization in 2004, Stowell has led the ATTA in advancing responsible, sustainable adventure travel practices. He has been advising and speaking around the world for the last 13 years, advocating for responsible adventure tourism as a powerful way for destinations to benefit from a business that sits at the intersection commerce, conservation and community.



How do you (ATTA) define “Sustainable Tourism?”

Shannon Stowell: We don’t have an official definition but I agree fully with the UNWTO’s definition: “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”

How does Adventure Travel fit into Sustainable Tourism?

SS: Because adventure travel (as we define it) focuses on nature and culture, we believe that it is critical for adventure travel companies to do their best to protect these assets.

What are the most dramatic changes have you seen in Sustainable Tourism over the past years?

SS: More mainstreaming seems to be the

main shift--more people care and more people know more about the subject. The days of hanging your towel on the rack at the hotel as your sustainable action are over (or should be where they are not!). I do think there’s still a very long way to go in both industry adoption and consumer awareness/demand.

How do destinations (like Peru) benefiting from Sustainable Tourism?

SS: Sustainable tourism focuses on value, not volume. Peru’s wonderful and fragile environment and local cultures could benefit greatly from travelers and companies that do not sacrifice them for business’ sake. When I look at the two ends of the scale: high volume/low margin/high impact on environment and society vs lower volume/high margin/low impact on environment and society, the choice of which direction to steer seems clear to me.

If you think about mass tourism and the impacts it can have, and the destinations that are suffering with mismanaged, or undermanaged tourism, it's discouraging. If you use up your natural resources by allowing them to be overconsumed, in the future you're going to be less desirable. Ten or twenty years from now, the destinations that protect themselves from this sort of overtourism are going to be the ones most in demand. Sustainable tourism is going to bring Peru travelers who care about their natural and cultural offers.

What are the responsibilities of the travel/tourism industry's various stakeholders?

SS: I think back to [former Canadian] Ambassador Tim Martin's speech on "the magic triangle," and how really thorny problems only get solved when governments, NGOs and business all attack the same problem. I would add in the media, and call it "the magic diamond." And the traveler is in the center of that diamond. All these groups bear a responsibility.

I think tour operators bear a responsibility, because they know better than most how much a specific destination can handle. I think the media bears some responsibility for how they report on destinations. I understand they're in a really tough spot on that, because they want to tell the stories of the places that haven't been discovered, but we've all seen lots of examples of overrun. Government bears a very important responsibility to regulate, to help keep tourism at appropriate levels. The NGOs are really important. They have to be watchdogs, and to be able to say,

"Hey, we're watching turtle populations here, and they're dropping, and one of the reasons why is people are riding 4 x 4s on the beach." And then there are travelers. Travelers need to start asking the right questions. Questions like, what sort of investment have you made in environmental responsibility in your business? Or, tell me how you work with local people in your destination.

Closing thoughts - where do you see Sustainable Tourism going in the future?

SS: I think ALL tourism should be challenged to be more and more sustainable. Climate, environment, social environments- all should be taken into consideration by all tourism development activities.

The exciting thing is that a lot more people are interested in travelling well, and going to destinations that are managing themselves well.

We're in an environment now, where a place like Peru is really in a good position to take advantage of this increasing trend of more responsible tourists, more responsible tourism, taking care of their natural assets through tourism that protects rather than exploits. Travelers are asking for this more and more, and lots of tour operators are being very clear in communicating what kind of tourism they offer.

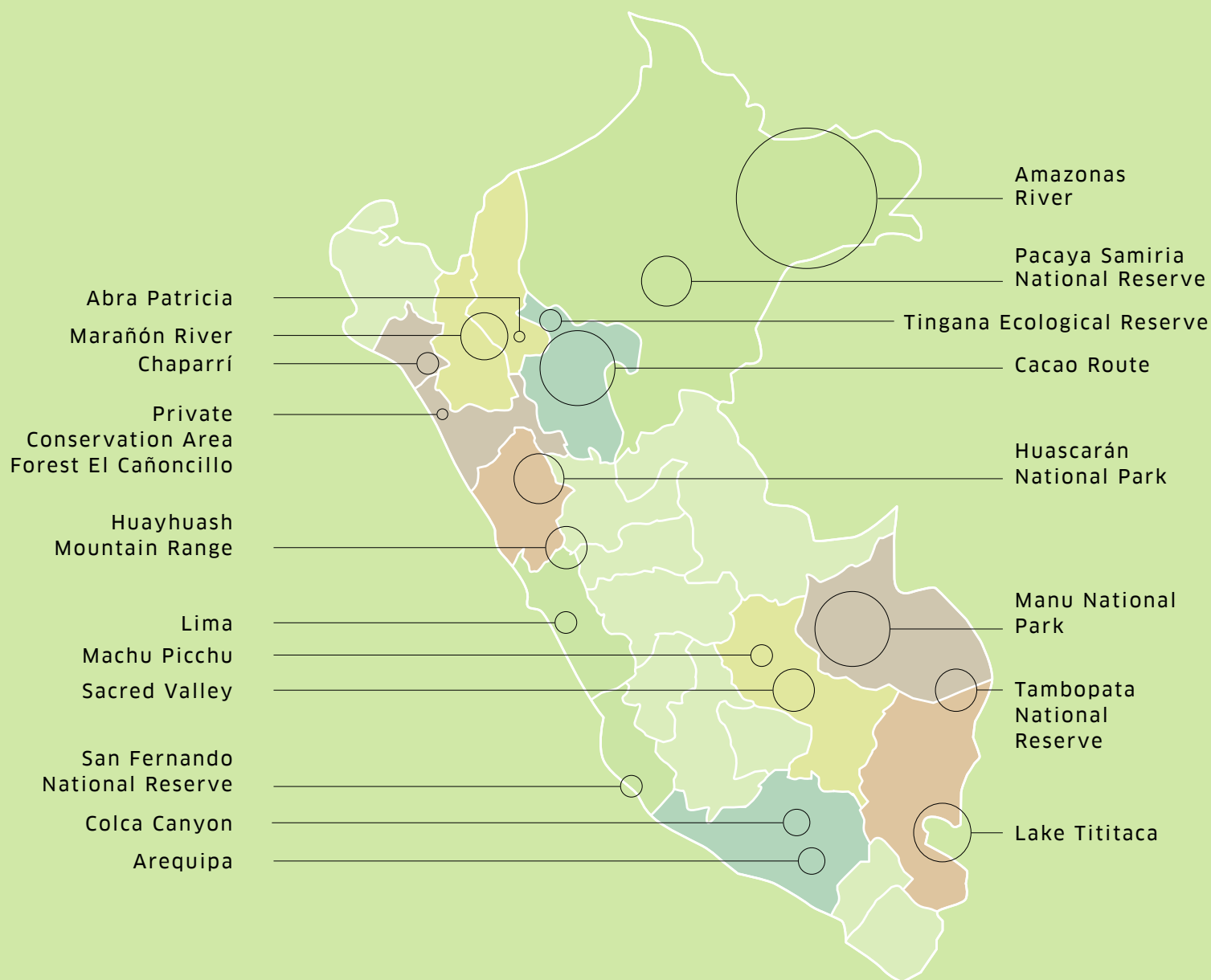
All tourism should be moving toward sustainability. I also recognize that no one's doing it perfectly, but lots of people are on the path. I'd like to hear every tourism company out there say, "Here is how we are moving our business toward sustainable tourism."

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Map of Peru



The Heart of The Amazon

LORETO



It's ironic that Peru's largest region is also one of its least populated. The Amazon jungle has a lot to do with that. Located in the northeast corner of Peru, the region of Loreto covers over 140,000 square miles (about one-third of all Peru), and has a population of under half a million, with most of those living in the capital city of Iquitos.

Loreto is home to the Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve (PSNR) and the Allpahuayo Mishana National Reserve. The area is perfectly suited for fans of nature and biodiversity, bird, wildlife and flower watchers, and those interested in mysticism and local village traditions.



We like Turtles



Small, but determined, the taricaya are coming back. (Photo: SERNANP)

Slowly but surely, over the years, the Taricaya population was becoming decimated.

Also known as the yellow Amazon river turtle (*Podocnemis unifilis*), these turtles were on the verge of extinction due to the illegal poaching of their eggs. Had that happened, several local Amazon communities would have lost their primary source of revenue.

In 2000, things changed. In that year, SERNANP, the Peruvian Parks Service, started the management of the Taricaya in the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve. The Peruvian government agency's first step was to conduct a study and assess the severity of the situation. Once that was completed, they banded together with leaders of the local communities.

Working together, they developed a plan that would allow the Taricaya to recover, and generate additional income for the communities within the natural protected areas.

For many families, the Taricaya, which are unique to South America, represented their livelihood. Their protection was critical.

The plan for bringing back the Taricaya in Pacaya Simiria was relatively simple. SERNANP and the communities build artificial beaches for the turtles to lay their eggs during reproductive season. The eggs are guarded by community members to prevent poaching. Once the hatchlings emerge—about 55 to 70 days later—40% are released into the wild, while the other 60% goes to the communities for commercial purposes.

The plan has been working. In 2018, the Taricaya laid 2.3 million eggs, 1.7 million of which hatched, bringing over \$1.3 million to 463 local families. Not only that, the Taricaya population has been growing annually.

SOME QUICK FACTS

- The natural habitat of this freshwater, semi-aquatic and partly terrestrial turtle traditionally extended across most of tropical South America.
- Yellow-spotted side-necked turtles are among the largest turtles found in South America.
- They can grow up to 45 centimeters (17 inches) in length and weigh up to 8 kilograms (17 pounds).
- Females tend to be considerably larger than males.
- The females lay two clutches of eggs each year, each with four to 35 eggs in it.
- Eggs will hatch 66 to 159 days after they are laid.

A slow ride through Pacaya Samiria. (Photo: WWF)



Taricaya Conservation. For more information please contact turismo@sernanp.gob.pe

The National Service of Natural Protected Areas (SERNANP) is a specialised technical public body under the Ministry of Environment, responsible for directing and establishing the technical and administrative criteria for the conservation of Natural Protected Areas (ANP) and the maintenance of biological diversity. The SERNANP is the governing body of the National System of Protected Natural Areas by the State (SINANPE) and carries out its work in coordination with regional and local governments. The mission is to ensure the conservation of the ANP and its biodiversity and the maintenance of environmental services in the context of participatory management.

Today this program is being run completely by the local communities, who have discovered an additional way to use the Taricaya to boost their economies without endangering the turtles—tourism. Many tour operators now offer their guests the opportunity to witness—and sometimes participate in—turtle conservation.

The Taricaya conservation program in Pacaya Samiria provides a shining model of how government and communities can work together to ensure natural resources can provide economic opportunity for people, while continuing to thrive.

A Business Born In The Amazon Gives Back



International Expeditions was born in the Amazon rainforest of Peru. Well, at least it was conceived there.

It all began when Richard Ryel first visited the area in around 1978. The college professor turned restaurateur, and his fiancé traveled to the Amazon region of Peru for about six weeks and fell in love with the rainforest while staying in a rustic lodge.

Richard, an avid naturalist, birder, botanist and butterfly collector, had a lightbulb moment; the best way to help protect the area he loved was through tourism.

At the time, there were non-stop flights between Miami and Iquitos, and he felt there were other people who would like to visit the Amazon if they only knew how to do it. The only tour to the Amazon offered at the time was out of New York, and titled “Amazon Green Hell”—a horrible name for a place Richard considered a green paradise.

Richard was an environmentalist and well-versed in natural history, but knew very little about the travel industry.

“We thought about forming a non-profit,” says co-founder Cox, “but it was too complex. So we decided to form a for-profit travel company, and just put the earnings into the projects that are important. And conservation and education in the Amazon region of Peru is what it would be.”

▶ The Amazon river dolphin (aka, the pink dolphin) live in fresh water, and are classified as Endangered. (Photo: SERANAP)



He was introduced to travel-industry veteran Steve Cox, a visionary with a passion for conservation and education, but who was not an avid naturalist. Together they formed International Expeditions in early 1980. In the early 1990's International Expeditions began offering the International Amazon Rainforest Workshops.

These one-week workshops would allow travelers to learn from local and international rainforest experts, and develop a deep appreciation of the Amazon rainforest. "Every cent that was earned through that was put into the projects, says Cox. "At that point we created our non-profit, the ACEER (Amazon Center for Environment, Education & Research) Foundation, to administer this."

Cox estimates that the revenue from the workshops allowed ACEER to protect almost one million acres of rainforest. To support



◀ Twilight on the Amazon. (Photo: Janine Costa, PROMPERU)

the ACEER foundation, visit their website at aceer.org.

Today International Expeditions takes about a thousand guests per year to the Amazon rainforest of Peru.

The International Expeditions ethos is apparent in its Mission Statement: "The mission of International Expeditions is to stimulate



▶ The hoatzin. (Photo: NatHab Photos)



▶ Squirrel monkey (Saimiri sciureus). (Photo: NatHab Photos)

an interest in, develop an understanding of and create an appreciation for Earth's most compelling wonders so that you'll be inspired to protect them for future generations". In the early 1990's International Expeditions began offering International Amazon Rainforest Workshops.

The company continues to put its mission to work in Peru in the form of several local community enriching projects. One such project in the Amazon Rainforest is the Adopt-A-School program. Created by CONAPAC, a local NGO which IE helped to found, in

1993, the Adopt-A-School program began by matching schools in the USA with rural schools in the Amazon rainforest. It quickly grew into a donor based program, providing rural schools and students with school supplies while promoting environmental education in their communities.

The program serves 120 schools with 4,200 students and teachers in 71 communities along the Amazon and Napo rivers. Before a child receives books and supplies, the parents sign a pledge to send their children to school every day and to use the supplies



“And that’s what we believe in to this day. We can’t do everything in the world, but what we can do, we need to do, and we need to do it well.”

– STEVE COX

FOUNDER: INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITIONS

with respect. IE even purchased an 18-foot boat to more easily deliver these supplies to the remote villages.

Some IE trips to the Amazon allow guests to play a “hands-on” role with the Adopt-A-School program. Guests who are less interested in these activities can still support the program through donations, which IE matches up to \$50,000 per year.

International Expeditions also has an on-going, three-year relationship with one of the world’s largest conservation NGOs, The Nature Conservancy.

As part of this partnership, IE contributes a portion of its trip price to The Nature Conservancy to support its work around the globe, including providing environmental planning support to indigenous organizations in the Peruvian Amazon. On some IE trips, naturalists from The Nature Conservancy will tag along, providing guests with their first-hand knowledge of the region, and the conservation work being done there.

International Expeditions prides itself on taking a holistic view of eco-travel, and inspiring its guests to advocate for some of the world’s most fascinating—and fragile—locations. IE Media Relations Director & Conservation Project Coordinator Emily Harley explains it this way, “True eco-travel encompasses history, food, wildlife, people and sometimes means finding the nature in the culture and the culture in the nature.” And that certainly is apparent in their efforts in Peru.

Working with Amazon villages to further education and conservation is part of the International Expeditions DNA. “That’s how we started,” says Cox, “and that’s what we believe in to this day. We can’t do everything in the world, but what we can do, we need to do, and we need to do it well.”

▶ Brown-throated three-toed sloth (Bradypus variegatus). (Photo: Leonardo Mercon, NatHab Photos)



▶ A scarlet macaw in flight. (Photo: NatHab Photos)



Big Is Beautiful

The Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve



The first thing you need to know about the Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve (PSNR) is that it's big. Seriously big. Over 8,000 square miles big.

Pacaya Samiria National Reserve: www.peru.travel/en/attractions/pacaya-samiria-national-reserve
For more information please contact turismo@sernanp.gob.pe

The second thing you need to know about the Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve is that it contains some of the richest biodiversity on the planet. As a part of the Amazon rainforest, it is home to 527 bird species, over 100 mammal species, 69 species of reptiles, 58 species of amphibians and 269 species of fish.

This includes several endangered species, such as the charapa turtle, the spider monkey, giant river otter and red macaw. The reserve is located in northeast Peru, in the Ucamara depression, where the Ucayali and Marañón

Rivers come together to form the Amazon River. The majority of its territory is floodable jungle, with various islands and lagoons (cochas). It is one of Peru's 76 natural protected areas.

About 24,000 people live within the boundaries of Pacaya-Samiria, comprising 92 communities. Most of the reserve's inhabitants make their living by fishing or farming, though today many are involved in conservation projects that have been designed to provide the communities with



a sustainable source of revenue. One great example is the program currently in place to conserve the Taricaya river turtles.

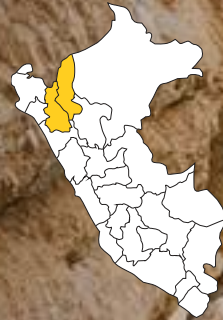
Tourism within Pacaya-Samiria is highly regulated, and in order to visit, you must be in the company of a guide or travel operator who is registered with the Peruvian government. Fortunately, there are plenty of those, and ample opportunity for you to explore this remarkable area in the heart of the Amazon. Sailing along the rivers, you can see manatees, pink dolphins, tortugas,

taricayas, caimanes and monkeys, as well as a massive variety of birds, mammals and fish.

There are various lodgings within the reserve and the surrounding areas that offer everything from basic amenities to exclusive services. A visit to the Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve is not easily forgotten. There simply are not many other places in the world where nature remains virtually untouched, and blooms so bountifully.

Birding Paradise

CAJAMARCA/AMAZONAS



The Cajamarca region sits in northern Peru, on the border with Ecuador. Its topography ranges from Andean mountain peaks over 8,000 feet tall, to the Amazon rainforest. It covers almost 13,000 square miles.

Just east of Cajamarca is the Amazonas region, which is similar in size to Cajamarca,

and also shares a northern border with Ecuador. Amazonas has a diverse landscape of mountains and steep river gorges, including the Marañon Valley. It is also the home of Kuelap, a massive Chachapoyas citadel containing over 400 stone structures.

Canyoneering in Muro Poso Canyon, a 1000-foot waterfall which plummets into the Marañón
(Photo: Benjamin Webb, Marañón Waterkeeper Collection)



Marañón River



Hiking through the dry-forests of the Marañón Canyon
Photo: Camote, Marañón Waterkeeper Collection)

Protecting The River That Feeds The Amazon

Like any other living thing, the Amazon River needs feeding. And the primary source of the Amazon's nutrition is the Marañón River.

The Marañón, which runs through both the Cajamarca and Amazonas regions, is one of the last major free flowing tributaries to the Amazon. It is a vital link between the Andes Mountains and the Amazonian lowlands. Each year at high water the Marañón runs brown with sediment flowing down from the mountains. The sediment is deposited in the rainforest, essentially feeding the Amazon with soil and nutrients that the ecosystems need to survive.

For hundreds of thousands of people, the Marañón is home. A significant population relies on the river for fishing, food production, transport and water. Groups who live by the river include peasant farmers, towns and villages; many of these people identify as indigenous Awajún and still lead a largely traditional way of life.

Not surprisingly, the Marañón Valley has abundant wildlife, as well. The area has some

of the highest levels of biodiversity on the planet. Thanks to its unusual location, isolated between the Andes Mountains and the Amazon rainforest, the Marañón supports an enormous number of unique ecosystems. This has allowed many species to evolve without interaction with other areas, which leads to extremely high levels of endemism in the valley.

These species rely on the Marañón to survive. Birdlife International lists the Marañón valley as urgently in need of protection; at least 10 of the bird species that live there are in IUCN categories of critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable. New species are regularly being discovered and scientists have shown that overall species diversity in the Marañón has been significantly under-estimated.

But, all is not well in the Marañón Valley. Oil extraction in the Peruvian Amazon has led to occasional oil spills in the river. There are many small-scale mining operations scattered throughout the Andes that leach pollution into tributaries which find their way



▶ Shooting the rapids on the Marañón (Photo: Benjamin Webb, Marañón Waterkeeper Collection)



▶ Waterfalls and Pools near Marañón Libre Conservation Area (Photo: Jessica Halter, Marañón Waterkeeper Collection)



"We believe the communities and species that rely on the Marañón River have a right to exist. We believe the Amazon is essential to life on earth as we know it, and the source of this mighty river is a critical link in this interconnected ecosystem. The protection of the Marañón River is a global issue and to address we bring support from all corners of the globe."

**—BENJAMIN WEBB,
MARAÑÓN EXPERIENCES**



◀ Sunrise over the riverside village of Mandán (Photo: Steve Pearlman, Marañón Waterkeeper Collection)

to the Marañón River. However, the greatest threat to the Marañón, and by extension, the wildlife and people who depend upon it, is a proposed series hydroelectric megadams.

The potential negative impact of these approximately twenty proposed dams is significant. The headwaters of the river will become a series of reservoirs and very few stretches of free flowing river will remain. This could be catastrophic to the unique ecosystems and extraordinarily high levels of endemism that the river supports. Many riverside villages stand to be flooded out of

existence, and it is likely that the livelihood of native communities downstream will be severely impacted.

Standing in opposition to dam development is Marañón Waterkeeper, a non-governmental organization whose mission is to protect and promote the Marañón River. Marañón Waterkeeper declares itself to be "guardian, steward and voice of the Marañón river." Marañón Waterkeeper is a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance, a global network of more than 275 Waterkeeper Organizations dedicated to protecting to rivers, lakes,



▲ View through the canyon (Photo: Anja Fuchtbauer, Marañon Waterkeeper Collection)

bays, sounds and other water bodies around the globe through grassroots action. The Marañón version of the organization was founded in 2015 by Bruno Monteferri and Benjamin Webb.

Webb was working as an environmental engineer in his native Australia when he decided he needed a change of scenery. Upon doing his research, he discovered, “there was just something about South America that called to me.” He soon learned about the Marañón, its importance to the Amazon ecosystem and the threats it was facing. “I

determined this was somewhere I could have a positive impact,” says Webb.

Webb fell in love with the Marañón Valley, and figured that if people came to visit it, they would too. So in 2016, Webb and Luigi Marmanilo opened Marañón Adventures, a tour company that takes guests down the river—sometimes gently drifting, and sometimes shooting through a cauldron of white water rapids. Along the way, guests also visit indigenous communities, and get a look at their traditional way of life and unique cultures.



▶ The children of Tupén playing in Waterfall Huaman (Photo: Camote, Marañón Waterkeeper Collection)



WHAT IS A PRIVATE CONSERVATION AREA?

It should come as no surprise that many land owners are ardent conservationists. After all, who has a better understanding of, and appreciation for, a track of land than the person(s) who owns it?

In Peru, private land owners have the opportunity to see that their land can be used to preserve natural resources and promote biodiversity by turning it into a Private Conservation Area (PCA).

There are currently 134 PCAs in Peru, varying in size from a single acre, to over 175 square miles. Designating land to be a PCA requires making a minimum 10-year commitment, though some PCA commitments are made in perpetuity. But regardless of the length of the commitment, the owner never loses ownership of the land.

Private Conservation Areas are recognized by the Peruvian State, by the Ministry of the Environment. In this sense, the PCAs are an instrument that allows the direct involvement of individuals, families, communities, organizations, companies or any private entity that owns a property right, in the conservation of biological diversity.

For more information please visit Marañón Waterkeeper's website: www.maranonwaterkeeper.org

Marmanilo, who is originally from Lima, was working as a safety kayaker in Cusco, but now is thoroughly enchanted with the Marañón. "It's non-stop work, and non-stop fun," he says.

Through Marañón Adventures, tourism is helping to conservation efforts in the valley. After covering running costs, a large portion of Marañón Adventures profits are used to support the work of Marañón Waterkeeper, river conservation projects and sustainable development in local communities.

Webb and Marmanilo encourage every participant on their trips to become a steward of the river; whether hosting a presentation about the Marañón in their local community or completing fundraising for river protection initiatives.

Caring about the Marañón Valley is caring about the Amazon rainforest, which is often referred to as "the lungs of the world." As such, the work being done by a handful of small business people—and their guests—in a remote part of northern Peru, is having global impact.

Abra Patricia



When Conservation is a Private Affair

While many national governments, including Peru's, designate finite areas as Natural Protected Areas (Peru has 76), private landowners can also declare their lands off limits to development and destructive practices. In this case, these are known as Private Conservation Areas (PCA), or Area Conservacion Privada (ACP) in Spanish.

These PCAs are often adjacent to Natural Protected Areas, thus extending the reach of the areas being conserved. PCAs allow individuals, families, communities, organizations, companies or any private entity that owns a property, the opportunity to participate in the conservation of biological diversity. There are currently 134 PCAs in Peru.

One such PCA is Abra Patricia. Located in the Yungas forest along the eastern slope of the Andes in northern Peru, Abra Patricia is a bird watcher's paradise. The area is home

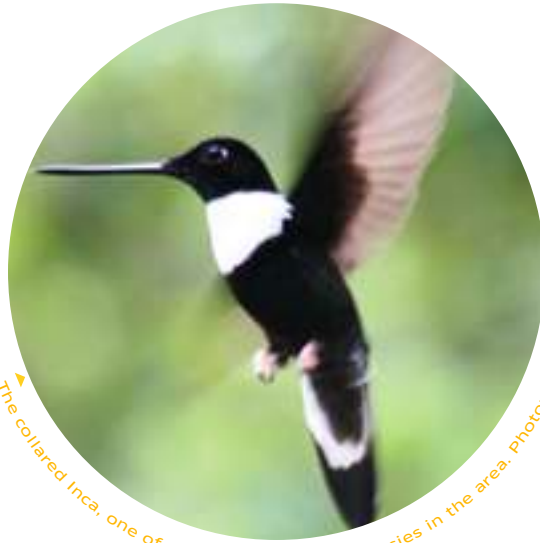
to more than 300 species of bird, including 23 that are considered globally threatened.

The area, which today spans 39 square miles, is owned and managed by the Association of Andean Ecosystems (ECOAN), a 15-year-old NGO dedicated to conserving endangered species of flora and fauna and threatened many ecosystems.

The Abra Patricia Reserve (formally known as the Abra Patricia-Alto Nieva Private Conservation Area) was established by ECOAN in 2005 with support from the American Bird Conservancy. The site is identified by the Alliance for Zero Extinction as a priority site for the protection of the critically endangered ochre-fronted antpitta and the long-whiskered owlet. The reserve is a key stop along the northern Peru bird route, and one of the only places you can see the yellow-scarfed tanager and Lulu's tody-flycatcher, both of which are endemic to



▲ View from the Owllet Lodge. Photo: ECOAN



▲ The collared Inca, one of many hummingbird species in the area. Photo: ECOAN



▲ The pudu is the world's smallest deer. Photo: ECOAN

the area. It is also a refuge for the critically endangered yellow-tailed woolly monkey, and an important site for wintering migrants, including Swainson's thrush.

ECOAN and the American Bird Conservancy have created another protected reserve near Abra Patricia, called Huembo, which is renowned for its various hummingbird populations.

ECOAN has always recognized the importance of including neighboring communities in its work. This includes establishing native tree nurseries and other reforestation initiatives to help restore degraded lands. To date, approximately one million trees and coffee bushes have been planted in the Yungas forest, where nearly 60% of the trees had been lost to illegal harvesting, and burning to make room for agriculture.



Constantine Auca is the President of ECOAN, a non-profit organization that has been instrumental in conserving the Abra Patricia Private Conservation Area and its surrounding communities.

▶ The elusive yellow-scarfed tanager. Photo: ECOAN



▶ The marvelous spatuletail. Photo: ECOAN



Tourism plays a role in conservation efforts, as well. By improving the infrastructure at Huembo and Abra Patricia, ECOAN is helping to attract an increasing number of ecotourists to the region to see exotic birds such as the marvelous spatuletail. Bringing visitors into the area provides new economic opportunities for local people—and helps put more resources to be put back into the reserve.

Today ECOAN operates two eco-lodges to accommodate visitors to the area: Owlet Lodge and Huembo Lodge. Located in the heart of Abra Patricia, Owlet Lodge is comprised of three comfortable cabins, each with a small lobby, spacious rooms with wood finishes and windows to observe the scenery.

The lodge also has a restaurant, reading room and 35-foot-tall observation tower. On the grounds, there are four trails, each over a kilometer long, where visitors can observe endemic birds, including the long-whiskered owlet, which is in danger of extinction.

Huembo Lodge is known as a prime location for viewing one of the world's most stunning hummingbirds, the marvelous spatuletail. The lodge has four double rooms with private bathrooms, two single rooms with private bathrooms and finally two single rooms with a shared bathroom. The lodge also has a restaurant for its guests, and no



▶ The Owllet Lodge. Photo: ECOAN

To learn more about Abra Patricia, please contact Gleny Yennifer Vera gleny@ecoanperu.org (Asociación Ecosistemas Andinos (ECOAN)) www.owlletlodge.org/about-us/

less than ten hummingbird fountains for its winged visitors.

The lodges, which receive around 350 visitors per year, use tourism revenue to hire and train staff from nearby communities, providing local residents with the opportunity

to achieve sustainable development at their communities. Private conservation areas such as Abra Patricia show that organizations beyond the government can play a critical role in conserving natural resources, and benefitting local communities.

MYTHS OR TRUTHS

Trees that walk and miracle crops

SAN MARTIN



The San Martín region is located in northern central Peru, mostly in the northern end of the Peruvian Amazon. Its largest city is Tarapoto, and its capital is Moyobamba. The region is renowned for its bounty of waterfalls, orchids and butterflies.

The Rio Abiseo (a UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage Site) and Cordillera Azul National Parks are sanctuaries for endangered species.

◀ Photo: La Patarashca Tours

CHAPTER THREE **SAN MARTIN**

Cacao Route



A Miracle in the Peruvian Jungle

Coca and cacao. Two crops that can thrive in the high jungles of the San Martin region of Peru. Coca and cacao. The words themselves even look alike, but there the similarity ends.

Coca has been a part of cultural traditions in this part of Peru for centuries. Its leaves have been used for healing, and as an offering of gratitude to Mother Earth. Today, it is used to mitigate altitude sickness.

In the 1970s, however, international organizations drug trafficking organizations began to cultivate coca for use in cocaine production. A United Nations report documented the region's economic and social struggles. These were dark days for San Martin.

Fast forward to the 1990's. Coca bush eradication is under way. Both the state and private industry introduce alternative development policies to the region, including the development of cooperatives for four agricultural staples: coffee, palm oil, heart of palm and cacao, the base ingredient in chocolate.

Fast forward to 2010, and, as a result of the alternative development procedures,

the San Martin region is enjoying economic growth and social sustainability at levels never before seen in Peru. This turnaround is often referred to as "The San Martin Miracle."

San Martin became Peru's first cacao growing region, and today is responsible for almost 40% of all nationwide cacao exports. As San Martin cacao began to receive international acclaim, it led to the development of a second industry for the region, tourism.

In 2016, three cacao routes were introduced, as a way to tell the story of the San Martin Miracle, and to continue to diversify the sources of revenue coming into the local communities.

The three cacao routes are day trips that depart out of the city of Tarapoto. The Lamas Route will take you to cacao fields, chocolate production plants and the village of Lamas. Here you'll get a window into village life, including local customs, clothing and even the village's own language.

The Pucallpillo Route is distinctive because getting to the village requires a boat ride



down the Huallaga River. Once there, you'll learn about how the community is living in greater harmony with its natural environment without ignoring the need to adapt to modern times. You'll also have the opportunity to purchase a variety of cacao-based products, including cacao cream, chocolate cereal and chocolate soap.

The Chazuta Route begins with a song. The women of the Mishki Cacao Association will serenade you when you arrive at the village

of Chazuta, "Come Peruvian citizen, come try the Mishki Cacao chocolate made in Chazuta, San Martín... Oh so yummy!"

This route, which is becoming increasingly popular with travelers, includes 14 communities that share one characteristic; here, cacao is a women's issue.

The women of Mishki started helping their husbands, all farmers, harvest their cacao crop. In time they noticed they had better

▶ The fermenting process. (Photo: La Patarashca Tours)



▶ Fermented beans on their way to becoming cocoa. (Photo: La Patarashca Tours)



ELIA GARCIA DE REATEGUI

Not all the women of the village of Chazuta make ceramics or chocolate. Elia Garcia de Reategui makes culinary traditions come to life. For the past 26 years, Elia and her husband have run a restaurant that celebrates the cuisine of the Amazon.

Elia has received numerous awards and recognition for her work, including multiple recognitions from MISTURA, the Peru's largest food festival. Elia works with female cooks of local Amazonian towns, encouraging the recovery of their generational wisdom, and urging them to participate in gastronomic trade shows to spotlight each town's potential and traditions.



administrative skills than the men, so they created the Mishki Cacao Association.

The women of Chazuta have historically been associated with traditional ceramics, which they still produce today. Carrying on the tradition of female empowerment, the women of Mishki take care of every detail of the presentation and marketing of their product, including the distinctive packaging and labeling. What's more, in addition to the welcoming song, they have composed songs and choreographies that thank the Earth

for the cacao it gives them--and promise happiness to those who consume it.

With the help of cacao--both the crop and the tourism routes--the San Martin Miracle continues to flourish.

Tingana



Everyone arrives to Tingana by boat. (Photo: PROMPERU)

The Tingana Ecological Reserve

Imagine floating down a tranquil river in a dugout canoe. All around you are the sights and sounds of the Amazon rainforest. Massive renaco trees spread their roots into your path. The treetops are filled with friar, pichico, black and omeco monkeys. Your guide points out a passing toucan.

Welcome to the Tingana Ecológica Reserve (Reserva Ecológica Tingana). You may have driven up from the city of Moyobamba for a day trip along the Rio Mayo, or perhaps you will be spending the night in one of the simple, yet comfortable thatched huts. Either way, you will be coming into direct contact with the beauty, spectacle and peace-inducing properties of nature.

Tingana is community-run tourism cooperative that provides an effective means of protecting a swath of forest approximately

ten square-miles in size. The entire area consists of temporarily flooded natural forest, which is characterized by an abundant and predominant population of aguaje (*Mauritia Flexuosa*) and renaco (*Ficus Sp*) trees. This is a refuge for wild animals, mostly monkeys and birds, many of which are endangered and/or vulnerable species.

Among the fauna, you can expect to see mammals like; river wolf, monkeys, pelejo, achuni, anteater and others. You will also encounter a great variety of plant species such as ferns, vines, orchids, bromeliads, among others. Bird species include the tarahui, flauterillo, toucan, manacaraco, heron; and fish such as shirui, tilapia, mojarra, atinga and carachama.

An important element of any visit to Tingana is savoring the food. Local townspeople



“Here the trees literally walk to protect their space.”

**–Cindy Reategui Garcia
La Patarashca Tours**

prepare delicious and varied typical dishes, using local ingredients. During your stay, be sure to try the exquisite tacacho with cecina, the popular rice juane, chicken inchicapi and others, accompanied by its fruit drink.

The Tingana Ecological Reserve is the result of the work of seven local families. They gathered together to form ADECARAM (Asociación de Conservación Aguajales y

Renacales del Alto Mayo). Their vision was to develop ecotourism as an activity that promotes conservation of natural resources, and a sustainable source of revenue for the local community.

To get to Tingana, make arrangements with The Tour Operator (reservations are a must), and they will pick you up in Moyobamba.

Wildlife of the dry forest

LAMBAYEQUE/LA LIBERTAD



The Peruvian region of La Libertad, which is situated on the northwest coast, is the only region that boasts all three of Peru's natural regions: the coast, the highlands (Sierra) and rainforest. The region's capital Trujillo is the second-most populated in all of Peru, and is strategically located where the Andes come closest to the coast.

Just north of La Libertad, and also on the coast is the region of Lambayeque. The

region is the home of two notable ancient civilizations, the Moche and the Chimú. The Chimú were renowned farmers, textile workers and goldsmiths. The Incas ultimately conquered the Chimú, but it was a process that took over four decades. Today visitors can explore the area, and witness the Trujillo Marinera Festival, which takes place every January and includes a national dance competition.



Photo: Heinz Plenge, Chaparrí

CHAPTER FOUR **LAMBAVAQUE/LA LIBERTAD**

Chaparri



A Community of Conservation

Today Peru boasts 134 Private Conservation Areas (PCA), areas where a private land owner has agreed to set aside an area for conservation and biodiversity protection. These PCAs are recognized by the Peruvian government, and are often adjacent to Natural Protected Areas, thus extending the reach of the areas being conserved.

The first Private Conservation Area was created in 2000, with the dedication of the Chaparri PCA, located in the Lambayeque region of northern Peru. The area had been suffering from a variety of threats, including deforestation (primarily due to subsistence agriculture), habitat loss and poaching.

When the Chaparri PCA was established by the local community of Santa Catalina de Chongoyape, it helped neutralize those threats. Natural resources were now protected, and members of the community had the opportunity to find more lucrative and reliable forms of employment.

The reserve generates employment for local people in a number of ways. These jobs include park guards, ecotourism

guides and working with species recovery programs. There is a reserve entrance fee for each visitor which is used to fund some key activities and also to support the local schools and health posts within the community. Additionally projects to develop and implement sustainable alternatives such as organic honey production and native cotton production are being implemented. The reserve also provides opportunity for free enterprise through the selling of souvenirs and foods to visitors.

The reserve, which occupies about 140 square miles, is a key site for conservation at an international level. The reserve lies within the Tumbesian region, and supports many species endemic to the dryforests of the region, including seven that are considered globally threatened with extinction by the IUCN. These include the critically threatened white-winged guan which now has a wild population of less than 200 individuals and the spectacled bear.

Spectacled bears, or Andean bears, (*Tremarctos ornatus*), are the only species of bear native to South America. As bears



▶ The spectacled bear is the only bear species native to South America.
Photo: Heinz Plenge, Chaparrí



▶ Don't forget to look up. Photo: Heinz Plenge, Chaparrí



White winged guan
(photo: Heinz Plenge, Chaparri)



Adult white winged guan with two chicks (photo:
Heinz Plenge, Chaparri)

go, they're considered mid-sized. They have black fur, with distinctive beige markings on the face, which often resemble eyeglasses. Thus spectacled bears. They're omnivores, but 95% of their diet is plant-based.

Chaparri is the site of the Spectacled Bear Rescue Center. Seven bears that have been confiscated from illegal captivity are currently housed in large semi-wild enclosures that provide the bears a stimulating natural environment in which to live. Visitors may visit some of these enclosures with a local guide and watch bears in their

natural habitat and learn more about these threatened animals. Other rescued animals can be seen at the center, including ocelot, Andean condor, king vulture, military macaw and more.

The community has also opened and operates the Chaparri Ecolodge. The lodge provides a tranquil escape in a spectacular landscape of the foothills of the Andes with excellent wildlife viewing opportunities, and is located close to the principal archeological sites (such as Tecume and Ventarron) and museums of Lambayeque. In addition to

SUSTAINABILITY—A FOUR-LEGGED TABLE

Heinz Plenge was instrumental in establishing Peru's first Private Conservation Area, the Chaparri Ecological Reserve. In 2000, it was Plenge who initially convinced the members of the Santa Catalina de Chongoyape indigenous (Campesino) Community to set aside 36,000 hectares of their land to form the PCA. Plenge remains actively involved with Chaparri today.

Here is how he describes sustainability in the reserve: "In Chaparri, sustainability is like a table with four legs."

LEG 1 - Natural sustainability: this means conserving wildlife and its habitat

LEG 2 - Cultural sustainability: this is about maintaining the cultural heritage and traditions of the community

LEG 3 - Social sustainability: this is about quality of life for the people of the community, it means having adequate housing, education for the children, medical services and more

LEG 4 - Economic sustainability: this means that the reserve has to generate enough revenue to continue, this is where tourism (and the jobs and revenues it creates) comes in



Segura fox (Photo: Heinz Plenge)



White-tailed deer (Photo: Juan Andres Plenge, Chaparri)



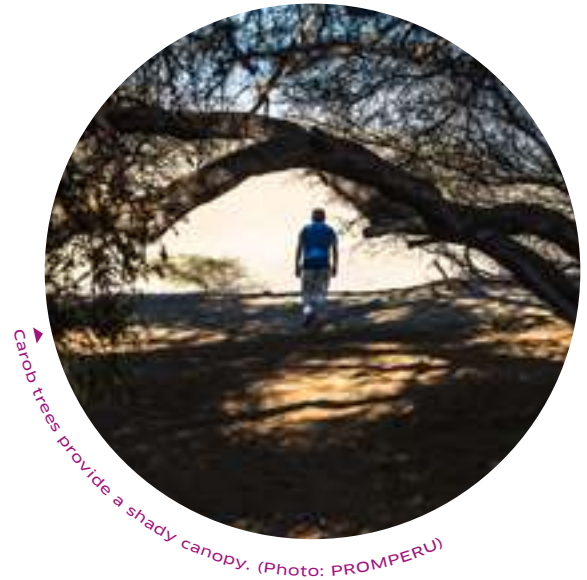
Contact of Heinz - Juan Andres Plenge (Heinz's son) japlenge@gmail.com
(Chaparri Ecological Reserve URL: www.chaparrilodge.com/)

visiting the Spectacled Bear Rescue Center, lodge guests who are so inclined can check out the new herpitarium, which is home to several local species of snakes. The lodge also has a bar, restaurant & swimming pool.

Chaparri has a system of trails that provide visitors with walks from half a mile to five miles in length. These trails pass through a variety of habitats and provide excellent wildlife and bird watching opportunities. A local guide is recommended.

The Chaparri Ecolodge is 45 miles from the city and airport of Chiclayo, which receives flights daily from Lima. From the airport, you can hire a private car which will take you to the lodge in 1 hour and 15 minutes, or take a public bus for a trip that takes 2 hours.

Cañoncillo



Exploring the Dry Forest of El Cañoncillo

Five ancient civilizations called the area that is presently the Cañoncillo Private Conservation Area home. It's easy to see what drew them all to this track of dry forest in northwest Peru.

Inside El Cañoncillo, you'll find placid lagoons, verdant and gentle hiking trails, vast desert sand dunes, herds of wild horses, medicinal plants and over 100,000 carob trees. Some of these trees are over a thousand years old, and can reach as much as 15 feet in diameter. Today visitors enjoy hiking, trekking, climbing, sandboarding (you

can rent a board) and camping (there are no cabins yet, so bring your tent along), but it wasn't always this way.

Rapidly advancing deforestation was threatening the area when Armando Ventura formed the Cooperativa Tecapa to begin the process of turning the 5 square-mile area into a private conservation area. The group's efforts began in 2000. They formed ranger brigades to combat the illegal logging of the carob trees. El Cañoncillo received its official recognition as a private conservation area in 2004. At the time, there were 170

◀ The stark beauty of the dry forest. (Photo: PROMPERU)





▶ A dramatic landscape, shaped by the wind. . (Photo: PROMPERU)



▲ One of many lagoons found in the dry forest. (Photo: PROMPERU)

members of the cooperative, though today that number has dwindled significantly, and El Cañoncillo increasingly relies on tourism revenues for survival.

In addition to the natural treasures found in El Cañoncillo, visitors can explore cultural remnants from five ancient peoples: the Moche, Chimú, Inca, Gallinazo and Cupisnique. All five kingdoms held this land at some point in history.

Inside the forest, there is a mud citadel with pre-Inca remains, known as El Cañoncillo

Archaeological Complex. The presence of such massive mud walls in the midst of a topography that is primarily sand boggles the mind. In 2001, the archeological complex was declared a National Cultural Heritage site by Peru's National Institute of Culture.

To reach El Cañoncillo, you'll most likely begin your journey in the city of Trujillo. From there, it's a two-hour drive in a private car, or you can take one of several busses from the city.

Trekking the Peruvian Switzerland

ANCASH



The region of Ancash seems to have a bit of everything. Just north of Lima, it sits on the Pacific coast, where it boasts pristine white sand beaches, and turquoise surf. Moving west, the region has high plateaus,

before becoming mountainous. The capital city of Huaraz rests in a valley between two spectacular mountain ranges: Cordillera Blanca to the east, and Cordillera Negra to the west.



Photo: Christian Declercq, Kmbero

The Great Inca Trail



▶ Dancers from the Ally Puricheg greet trekkers to Huanuco Pampa. (Photo: Christian Declercq, Kmicer)



Where Incan Culture is Alive and Well

The Qhapaq Ñan, or Great Inca Trail, is a network of roads covering 25,000 miles, and the shortest route to gaining insight into the ways of the ancient Incas.

This ancient trade route, which connects the most important towns in the Andes, passes through spectacular scenery, centuries-old Andean villages and tiny agricultural communities.

As it makes its way through the Ancash region, the Qhapaq Ñan passes through the spectacular Huascarán National Park, home of the Cordillera Blanca mountain range and Nevado Huascarán, the highest peak in Peru at 22,205 feet. The unspoiled natural landscape

of the park supports thriving ecosystems that are brimming with life. Trekking here is nothing short of breath-taking.

Naturally, the The Qhapaq Ñan, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004, is a source of great pride to Peruvians. Thus, under the auspices of Peru's Ministry of Culture, an effort to develop and preserve the The Qhapaq Ñan was launched five years ago.

When these efforts reached the archeological site of Huánuco Pampa (located in the Huanuco region), a huge administrative center built to aid travelers on the Great Inca Road in the 15th century, the government considered it



► The Great Inca Trail south of Huanuco Pampa. (Photo: Rodrigo Cabrera)

▶ Traditional homes along the Great Inca Trail. (Photo: Christian Declercq, Kmccero)



▶ The Great Inca Trail expeditions team in 2017 led by Nick Stanziano after two months of walking from Ecuador to the region of Ancash. (Photo: Christian Declercq, Kmccero)



A MONUMENTAL ROAD

“Some roads are built for utility, others for efficiency and very few as monuments. A monumental road transcends utility and efficiency, and demonstrates power and influence. A monument serves as a pilgrimage destination, but in the case of the Great Inca Road, the monument is the journey.”

**– Nick Stanziano
Founder SA Expeditions**



important to ensure members of the local communities were involved.

Local involvement in the conservation and preservation of the site would help underscore its social and cultural significance.

This sort of integrated approach to development had proved effective in other projects of Qhapaq Ñan. It has three components: Research, Conservation and Cultural Partner, the last focuses on strengthening the local population's capacities for participation in conservation, preservation and sustainable operations.

Thus, as a result of the workshops and talks held with community members of Aguamiro (where the Huánuco Pampa is located), it was decided to form an association linked to the archaeological zone for its promotion and management. And so Ally Puricheg came to be.

Ally Puricheg, which is the Quechua term for “walking well,” is a non-profit organization

established to promote community participation in the conservation, protection and management of Huánuco Pampa.

Ally Puricheg is made up of sixteen community members from the Aguamiro Campesino Community that is adjacent to Huánuco Pampa. This group of Quechua speakers has ancestral knowledge, which they share with visitors. They work on preservation efforts at the site, and allow visitors to see Huánuco Pampa through the eyes of the descendants of the people who



▶ The base of the rock wall of the Great Inca Trail still visible in route.
(photo: Christian Declercq, Kmccero)

► The principal entrance into Huánuco Pampa. (Photo: Christian Declercq, Kmcerro)



once lived there. Visitors are also treated to traditional musical and dance performances, and a sacred ceremonial ritual known as an “ushno,” or offering. In this ceremony, a village elder gives thanks to the mountains, the sun and to life for the richness they have in their lives.

This sort of community involvement not only enriches the visitor experience, it brings forth a sense of cultural pride among the members of the local communities. The Cultural Partner of Huánuco Pampa, Carla

Cordova Frias explains, “It’s important that the local villages have a sense of pride in the past, so they don’t lose these ancient traditions and customs. What these villagers know is valuable, and people are willing to travel many miles to hear what they have to say.”

While any trek along the Qhapaq Ñan and visit to Huánuco Pampa is fascinating, the active involvement of the members of Ally Puricheg enrich the experience, truly bring it to life.

Llamatrek



▶ A traveler makes a new friend.
(Photo: Llamatrek)



People have been making this journey for 3,000 years. Before the Spanish, before the Incas, it was the Chavin people who would make this 3-day trek from Olleros to a sacred temple, Chavin de Huantar. To assist them on their journey, the Chavin would use vicuñas and llamas as pack animals.

Today, visitors to the Ancash region can make the same trek, and use the same pack animals, thanks to the efforts of Chavín Association of Mountain Assistants (ASAM),

and their project, Llamatrek. It's a high-altitude adventure that passes through Huascaran National Park and its majestic Cordillera Blanca mountain range, and ends at a fascinating archeological treasure.

Along the way, you'll pass through the indigenous Andean villages of Canrey Chico, Chichucancha and Nunupata, where the residents will warmly receive you, and share some insight into their way of life. You'll visit farms, cook traditional recipes



with local ingredients and share a meal with the villagers. You'll also be treated to some traditional music and dances.

Llamatrek was created 20 years ago with the purpose of bringing back the llama as the primary pack animal for this and other similar treks. Llamas are endemic to this area of the Andes, but over the years, they have been replaced by horses, donkeys and mules, which are now causing harm to the area by overgrazing.

Certainly one of the highlights of the Llamatrek is passing through the Huascarán National Park, famous for the exceptional beauty of the Cordillera Blanca, the intense turquoise lagoons formed by glaciers, and its large variety of Andean flora and fauna. The park is home to some of the highest tropical peaks in the world, including Huascarán, the tallest mountain in Peru, standing 22,205 feet above sea level.

Huascarán National Park was created in



**“We involve our young people,
we encourage them so that they
participate in entrepreneurship,
we want them to gradually
become familiar with the
activities, and then they can be
accredited and they can also
offer their services to tourists ”**

JORGE MARTEL ALVARADO

**Member, Chauín Association Of
Mountain Assistants (Asam)**

LLAMATREK PARTNER



◀ The Cordillera Blanca range. (Photo: Llamatrek)

1975, and declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1977. In 1985, it was included on the UNESCO Natural Heritage of Humanity list.

The park stretches over 1,300 square miles, and holds 712 glaciers and 434 lagoons formed by glaciers. It also boasts powerful rivers thanks to snowy peaks that feed the the Santa, Marañón and Pativilca river basins. In addition to Huascaran, the park is home to numerous other peaks measuring between 5,000 - 6,768 meters (16,404 - 22,205 feet) above sea level,

attracting mountain climbers from all over the world who come in search of their summits and trekking paths. The park boasts close to 25 walking trails and 125 climbing paths, with different levels of difficulty.

The unspoiled natural landscape is dramatic and the ecosystems in the park are thriving. Visiting and exploring Huascaran National Park is a journey through the history of Peru that offers visitors the opportunity to experience powerful landscapes. The



▲ Llamas were the traditional pack animals of the Andes. (Photo: Llamatrek)

Llamatrek's final destination is equally powerful. Chavín de Huantar is an archeological site that was once a temple of the Chavin people, one of the oldest cultures from South America. Chavin culture was ruled by priests, and in the temple, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, you can wander through the centuries and learn about its many mysteries. Be sure to bring a flashlight to explore the underground labyrinths. Nearby is the Chavin de Huantar

Museum, which holds artifacts that date back to 1,200 BC.

The Llamatrek is helping to promote sustainability in the region by using tourism to provide economic opportunity for the people who live in the villages, and by helping to preserve cultural traditions that have been around for thousands of years, and one of those traditions is, of course, walking with llamas.

Nourishment for Body and Soul

LIMA/ICA



As the capital city of Peru, Lima constitutes its own region. And rightfully so, the city bristles with energy and activity. Inviting neighborhoods like Miraflores and Barranco offer a wide variety of shops, hotels, bars and restaurants. Speaking of restaurants, Lima is becoming increasingly known for its exciting and innovative restaurant scene. It's one of the primary reasons Peru is often considered the Gastronomic Capital of The Americas.

The region of Ica, just south of Lima on the Pacific coast, is known for its dramatic coastline, and vast desert area. The region attracts three types of travelers: adventure seekers, who sandboard, paraglide and kitesurf along the coast; nature lovers, who take delight in the region's protected areas; and archeology buffs and others drawn to the ancient mystery of the Nasca Lines.

Photo: Nazca Ecológica

Viñak Refugio



An Escape from the City, a Blessing for a Village

It's a story that could have ended tragically, but ultimately did not. Enrique Umbert Sandoval was driving through the Andes mountains south of Lima when he accidentally struck a boy who was riding a bicycle.

Enrique loaded the injured boy into his car, and drove the boy to his home in the village of Viñak. The boy needed medical attention, so Enrique drove the boy and his parents drove to a hospital in Lima.

In time, the boy made a full recovery, and during that time, Enrique and the family formed a friendship. When the family invited Enrique to spend a week at their home in Viñak, he readily accepted.

During his stay, Enrique fell in love with the small Andean village and its people (population approximately 400). He decided to build a home there. His simple house in the picturesque mountains provided Enrique with a welcome respite from the hustle and bustle of Lima.

Enrique invited friends to come join him in his high-altitude retreat. They, too, felt the healing power of the solace and tranquility of the mountains, and soon began asking if they could rent the house. As the founder of Mountain Lodges of Peru, Enrique recognized a business opportunity when he saw one, and soon made additions and upgrades to his home, and in 2002, converted it into Viñak Refugio de Aventura (Viñak Adventure Refuge),

a mountain lodge where anybody could come for a respite from urban madness.

It was important to Enrique that his new lodge embrace the tenets of sustainability, and be a force for positive change in Viñak and the other surrounding villages. First, he wanted to make sure the lodge would be staffed, as much as possible, with local villagers. This meant creating jobs that ranged from housekeeping, to office management, to food preparation, grounds management and more. Since the local people had never held positions like this (or even stayed in a hotel for that matter), this required a significant investment in education.

At first, all the positions were filled by men, but over time, attitudes among the villagers began to evolve, and women were increasingly being hired at the lodge. Today Viñak Refugio de Aventura's Manager is a woman, as is its Governanta (the person in charge of day-to-day operations), Marlene Chulluncuy, who has worked at the lodge for 15 years, starting as a housekeeper.

Viñak Refugio de Aventura supported additional educational efforts in the village, as well. The lodge funded improvements in the village school, and imported teachers and specialists for both youth and adult education. The villagers were taught advances in agriculture (the primary means of support for most families), as well as fundamental environmental issues (proper trash disposal, etc.), and legal issues like the consequences and prevention of domestic abuse.

The lodge helped fund the building of a medical center for Viñak, and imported doctors from Lima to practice there.

It was important to Umberto that Viñak Refugio de Aventura be a responsible steward of the land and its surrounding environment. The lodge has an aggressive recycling program, has repurposed waste water for irrigation, and cultivates and plants thousands of trees.



Marleni Chullunqu

Marleni is testament to what can be achieved through hard work and perseverance. She started working in Refugio Viñac in 2003 in the cleaning and care department. Today she is the Governor of the Viñac Lodge, overseeing every aspect of its daily operations. And she managed to achieve this while raising three children, all of whom are adults now, living and working in Lima



Today the Viñac Refugio de Aventura is open to anyone desiring a quiet, mountain escape from the turmoil of the modern world. The lodge is a perfect setting for travelers interested in wellness and serenity. It is an ideal spot for meditation and spending more time in nature. At an altitude of over 10,000 feet, the vistas are spectacular.

The lodge--which is operated by Yanapana (www.yanapana.org), the non-profit arm of Mountain Lodges of Peru--has a total of 11 modern, comfortable rooms. The gourmet dishes served in the lodge's panoramic restaurant are wholesome, traditional Peruvian recipes lovingly prepared with fresh, local ingredients.

If you like a little more activity in your adventure, Viñac Refugio de Aventura can accommodate that, as well. The grounds of the lodge features an abundance of trails which are perfect for hiking, horseback riding

or even mountain biking. Guests can fish in a nearby lake, and enjoy picnics and barbeques on the lodge's grounds. Many guests take time to explore the village of Viñac, which is adjacent to the lodge. Oftentimes, guests are so moved by these visits, they make donations to Yanapana to further support its work in the village.

Reaching Viñac Refugio de Aventura is not easy. Though it's only 175 miles south of Lima, the trip can take up to five hours, the last two of which are on slow-going, unpaved roads. But the destination is worth the journey.

"It's a pretty nice place to go and get rid of civilization," says Alejandro Gordillo, a Manager at Mountain Lodges of Peru.

As for that boy on the bicycle, he not only made a full recovery, he went to school in Lima, then returned to Viñac, where he went to work for the Viñac Refugio de Aventura. And so the wheel turns.

Chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino; Bringing a Taste Of The Amazon To Lima



For more information please visit www.despensamazonica.org



“Every time I travel through the Peruvian jungle I find new ingredients and new ways of approaching the kitchen through the wisdom that I discover everywhere in the Amazon. We have much to learn from the people who live in the largest tropical forest in the world. Approaching them and investigating the fruits of their rivers, soils, trees, plants ... is the work we do at Despensa Amazónica.”

– **PEDRO MIGUEL SCHIAFFINO, CHEF & EXPLORER OF THE PERUVIAN AMAZON**

The city of Lima is today recognized as one of the world's premiere gastronomic destinations. The Peruvian capital's restaurant scene offers a wide array of international cuisines, traditional Peruvian cuisine, and often a fusion of both. While Andean culinary traditions are well represented among Lima's renowned restaurants, only two offer diners the chance to become immersed in the

traditions and culture from another part of Peru--the Amazon rainforest. They are Malabar and amaZ, and they are the work of Chef Pedro Schiaffino, a.k.a., The Jungle Chef.

Schiaffino, a Lima native, received his culinary education from New York's Culinary Institute of America (CIA), the Italian Culinary Institute for Foreigners (ICIF) and Castiglioni d'Asti, Piemonte. He spent five years working



in Italy, before returning to Lima in 2002 with the intent of opening a restaurant of his own.

After surveying the Lima restaurant scene at the time, Schiaffino noticed something. There was no shortage of restaurants offering French, Italian and other classic European cuisines, however, there were only a handful of Peruvian restaurants offering Peruvian food. And there were absolutely no well known restaurants serving cuisine from the Amazon region.

Schiaffino sensed an opportunity, and in 2003 took a trip that would change his life. He visited Iquitos, a city in the region of Loreto that is often referred to as the gateway to the Amazon. While there, he discovered the richness of the Amazon in terms of both the biodiversity of life, and the deep cultural heritage of the indigenous communities.

Upon returning to Lima, Schiaffino opened Malabar in 2004. His intent was to not only

introduce Lima diners to traditional Amazon ingredients and recipes, but also to increase awareness of Amazonian culture and heritage.

Schiaffino continued to shuttle between Lima and the Amazon. “When I hear from friends in Iquitos or villagers along the river about an unfamiliar dish or ingredient, I would start asking questions,” he recently told 50 Best. “Then I’ll go to the Amazon, sometimes heading off on a speedboat for eight hours or more in search of ingredients to taste and experiment. It’s amazing how the Amazon constantly offers up tastes and flavors I’ve never imagined before.”

The importance of supporting the farms and communities he bought from in the Amazon quickly became apparent to Schiaffino. He needed to ensure a reliable supply chain for ingredients, as well as contribute to the overall wellbeing of the communities. Malabar had already started to invest in local projects, but in order to attract additional



donors, Schiaffino formed an NGO, Despensa Amazonica. Literally, “Pantry of The Amazon,” the organization began working with local communities to help fund and operate health and education projects.

Today Despensa Amazonica works with various communities the Amazon region of Loreto. Providing, among other things, training in sustainable farming methods which help increase yields and is looking to eventually supply healthy food for children in the local schools. The organization also works to help these communities expand markets and improve the value chain of their agricultural products.

Despensa Amazonica is presently involved in

two projects to help advance sustainability in the Amazon. Its paiche project is working with local fishermen to revive the paiche population (a fresh water fish that can grow up to 400 pounds) to sustainable levels. The organization is also working to bring about women’s empowerment through its Tucupí Negro project. Despensa Amazonica is helping to create a market for this traditional sauce that is fermented and cooked from the brava cassava plant, thus allowing local women the opportunity to create additional income for their households.

Despensa Amazonica is also showing local communities that their traditional farming methods, cuisine and other cultural traditions



▲ Pacamoto. (photo: amaZ, Pedro Schiaffino)

have an additional value that is not being leveraged--their potential appeal to tourists. Schiaffino notes the trend of visitors seeking out real, authentic experiences when they travel. Travelers want to know where their ingredients are coming from, how they were farmed and how they got to their plates, he maintains.

By showing communities that visitors love and appreciate what they--the villagers--take for everyday occurrences, local communities will rediscover the value that their traditions. It also instills a sense of pride in where they come from and what they are all about. Given all this, Schiaffino believes the rural Amazon communities have tremendous tourism potential. He is helping bring this vision to fruition through Aqua Expeditions, an Amazon River cruising company Schiaffino is a partner in. (Not surprisingly, Schiaffino is

also the company's Consulting Chef.)

Back in Lima, Schiaffino took his love affair with the Amazon a step further when he opened his second restaurant amaZ in 2011. The menu here relies almost exclusively on ingredients from the area, using over 90 different products sourced from over 20 communities. The culinary experience here goes beyond ingredients, as well. Chefs use many of the same cooking methods, tools and utensils the communities have been employing for centuries. It truly is a culinary tradition brought to life.

For Pedro Miguel Schiaffino, The Jungle Chef, the food is important, of course, but in the big picture, it's merely a gateway to a larger, more rewarding cultural exploration.

San Fernando National Reserve



▲ The Andean condor. (Photo: Nazca Ecológica)

The Treasures of San Fernando

The San Fernando Bay is home to sea lions, seals, otters, turtles, grey foxes, whales, Humboldt penguins and even Andean condors. This, of course, is just a small sampling of the fauna found in this Pacific coast bay located in the region of Ica, and just one of the reasons why this area earned protected area status in 2011.

The San Fernando Bay is just a small part of the San Fernando National Reserve (SFNR), which spans over 600 square miles.

Visitors can currently enter the southern and eastern areas of the reserve, which is located 40 miles north of Nasca. Once there, you can engage in various activities such as observing and speaking with artisanal fishermen, sandboarding, trekking, kayaking, whale watching, camping and more. Of course, the wildlife watching is spectacular. Tour operators based in the cities of Marcona,

Nasca, Ica and Lima will be able to process your admission to the reserve.

One of the more dramatic, if unexpected, wildlife watching opportunities at the San Fernando Bay is the massive, swooping Andean condor. Yes, the Andean condors are more commonly found in the peaks and valleys of the Andes Mountains, but over the years, they began feeding on seal placentas (during mating season), and have been coming to the bay ever since.

Should you want to stay in the San Fernando National Reserve for more than just a day trip, you can rent a room (or at least a bed) at a hostel near the San Fernando Bay. The hostel belongs to Nazca Ecológica, a private company dedicated to protecting and preserving the waters of the bay, primarily through partnering with local, artisanal fishermen. The company is able to



▶ San Fernando Bay. (Photo: Alonso Orellana, SERNANP)



▶ Seabirds find no shortage of prey in San Fernando Bay. (Photo: Nazca Ecológica)

► An Andean condor on the hunt. (Photo: Nazca Ecológica)



► Craggs and coves in San Fernando Bay. (Photo: Nazca Ecológica)





“Visiting the San Fernando National Reserve is an extraordinary experience of contact with nature and wildlife and, at the same time, represents an opportunity to contribute to its conservation. Come visit us!”

**– Hernán & Cary Martorelli
Owners, Nazca Ecológica**

operate a hostel within the SFNR, because it was established years before the area was declared a reserve.

In addition to the bay, the San Fernando National Reserve is comprised of numerous ecosystems: dry and riverine forests, coastal hills and Tillandsias (evergreen flowers); Coastal Desert, Estuaries, Islands, Islets, cliffs as well as the Benthic (bottom of the ocean) and Pelagic (complete ocean water column) Marine Ecosystems. Each of these ecosystems provides the opportunity for exploration and inspiration.

The coastal hills are one of the most important ecosystems of the SFNR; with vegetation covering more than 9,000 hectares. The vegetation grows on the gentle slopes facing San Fernando Bay in the southern area of the reserve. The coastal hills are constituted as islands or extensive vegetation communities separated from each other by varying distances from the hyper-arid desert.

The coastal desert is by far the dominant ecosystem in the reserve. It can be rocky or sandy and dotted with varying types of mounds. The desert is home to a variety of bird species, including the owl of the sands and the miners. It is also a transit area and habitat for species such as the Peruvian guanaco and Andean fox.

The coastline of the SFNR is brimming with islands, islets and cliffs. These environments are an ideal habitat for species such as sea lions, sea otters, the Humboldt penguin, guano birds and other seabirds such as chuita, tendrils and more.

Twenty species of macroalgae, one species of sponge, 21 species of polychaetes, 32 species of mollusks and 5 species of crustaceans have been recorded in the Benthic marine ecosystem. The algae here helps support numerous species of fish, including fine seafood like chanque, octopus and limpet, as well as common seafood such as choro, scallops and snails.

The SFNR houses the mouths of the Ica and Grande rivers, forming estuaries of almost 100 hectares. This ecosystem is a mixture of fresh and salt water that forms a wetland with halophilic plants and is a habitat for resident and migratory birds.

Located in the channels of the Ica and Grande rivers, with an estimated coverage of more than 200 hectares, the reserve's dry forest is important because of the richness of flora and fauna species that it hosts, including 58 species of birds.

The reserve's riverine forest is located around the Ica, Grande and Nasca rivers, with an estimated coverage of 742 hectares.



Wild flowers in the San Fernando reserve.
(photo: SERNANP)



The Inca Tern bird breeds on the coast of Peru.
(photo: Nazca Ecológica)

It boasts a high diversity of flora, as well as bird species (81).

A variety of marine life can also be found in the riverine forest, including the Southern right whale, the humpback whale and dolphins stand. There have also been four species of marine reptiles observed here: the hawksbill turtle, the green turtle, the giant sea turtle and the olive ridley turtle.

In order to conserve these ecosystems and their coastal marine biodiversity of

the San Fernando National Reserve, Peru's national parks agency, SERNANP, has been implementing strategies that allow the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of marine and landscape resources through the implementation of Tourism Conservation and Promotion Agreements. As such, visitors should be able to responsibly enjoy the spectacular scenery and diverse wildlife of the reserve for many years to come.

▶ Hundreds of sea lions can be seen playing and napping on the beach. (Photo: SERNANP)



Andean communities open their doors

CUSCO



The city of Cusco literally has layers of culture. At its base is a Killke layer, topped by Incan, topped by Spanish. The aspects of all these different cultures, often literally stacked on top of each other, make Cusco a rich and fascinating destination.

While Cusco is the jumping off point for most visits to Machu Picchu, city itself boasts numerous attractions to enchant visitors. These include the main square, which the Incas called Huacaypata, the artisans

quarter of San Blas, the Convent of Santo Domingo, built on top of the Temple of the Sun or Korikancha and the palaces of the Inca and his court are part of a long list of archaeological wonders.

Of course, the ancient Incan capital is a thoroughly modern city, swirling with restaurants, bars, music and colorful nightlife. A wide variety of hotels can accommodate virtually any budget or lifestyle.



Parwa Restaurant



A Restaurant That Serves Its Community

Bruce Poon Tip believes tourism can be a phenomenal force for good. However, the G Adventures founder also believes that a travel company, like his own, should not be distracted from its primary purpose—delivering a high-quality travel experience for its guests.

To bridge the gap between providing for travelers and caring for the destinations they visit, Tip founded the Planeterra Foundation in 2003.

In a nutshell, Planeterra is a non-profit organization that helps develop small, for-profit businesses in communities in or near tourism destinations. Doing this allows local communities to benefit from tourism when they otherwise might not have.

Once the businesses have been established, G Adventures brings traffic (travelers) to support them. The travelers get a unique and authentic experience, and the businesses enjoy the financial benefits of having tourism in their communities. It's a win-win that can continue indefinitely.

Planeterra has helped launch five small businesses that cater to travelers in Peru: the Ccaccacollo Women's Weaving Co-op, the Parque de las Papas (Potato Park), the Lares Community Campsite, Esencia Andina and the Parwa Community Restaurant.

While all of these businesses are enjoying success, the Parwa Community Restaurant is an especially shining example of the Planeterra model in action. The restaurant, which is located in Peru's Sacred Valley, and owned by the community, was breaking even within its first three months of operation, and made a profit in its first year.

Restaurant employees have monthly salaries, health insurance, pension funds, and other labor benefits. Over 25 micro entrepreneurs received technical assistance and funds to establish new businesses to supply the restaurant, or sell their goods to Huchuy Qosco travelers.

Last year, when Bruce Poon Tip visited the restaurant with a group of journalists, the community members actually presented him with a donation back to Planeterra.



▲ An Instagram-worthy meal at Parwa Restaurant. (Photo: Planeterra / G Adventures)



▲ Traditional crafts from the Ccaccacollo Women's Weaving Co-op. (Photo: Planeterra / G Adventures)



▲ The grounds at Parwa Restaurant. (Photo: Planeterra / G Adventures)

For more information please visit www.planeterra.org

Today, Parwa provides meals for 16,000 G Adventure travelers per year. Diners sit at long tables, and are served by community members in traditional dress. The meal consists of local, organic ingredients and often includes salad, quinoa, some form of protein and, of course, potatoes. The community has invested profits from the

restaurant in a water project, a community garden—even a computer lab.

Planeterra President Jamie Sweeting notes that the restaurant not only benefits the community, but provides a unique opportunity for travelers, as well. “Travelers get the chance to meet people on their own



“By working together with all the other stakeholders, business can play a pivotal and positive role in destination stewardship and responsible travel.”

**– JAMIE SWEETING
PRESIDENT, PLANETERRA FOUNDATION**

▶ Visitors share in cultural traditions. (Photo: Planeterra / G Adventures)



▶ The traditional Andean wool source. (Photo: Planeterra / G Adventures)



turf,” Sweeting says. “It’s not a hand-out, but a business exchange between equals.”

Sweeting cites a specific example of the impact the restaurant has had on individual community members. “I met one of the servers there,” Sweeting says, “and she told me that prior to the restaurant, she was one of the few people who would benefit from tourism. She would hike down to the highway, and try to sell handicrafts on the side of the road, and once in a while, somebody would stop and buy something. She would have to leave the house pretty early in the morning, and her older kids would have to look after the younger kids. They’d be waiting outside the school gates before the school opened. She’d get home in the evening, and her kids would have started the evening meal already.

“Now she gets to cook for her kids, take them to school, go and do some chores, then go to work in her community, and she’s back to pick the kids up from school. It’s been a life-changing experience for her family. She’s really proud to be part of an enterprise that she, as a part of the community, is a co-owner of. It’s empowered a whole community, and it’s empowered her as an individual, and changed the life and trajectory of her family. And that is what it really is all about.”

Buen provecho.



A Taste of Village Life



An Ambitious Plan For a Lofty City

High in the Andes, only 100 miles north of Cusco, sits the town of Ollantaytambo (population 11,000+). For decades, the town has served as a launching point for the thousands of people visiting of Machu Picchu each year. Though only 20 miles away from the famed Incan lost city, Ollantaytambo has not been able to benefit from all the tourism traffic that passes through it. Very few visitors spend any time—or money—in the town.

To harness the power of tourism to help in the development and prosperity of Ollantaytambo, numerous stakeholders, under the leadership of Turismo Cuida (Tourism Cares), created Plan Wallata.

The five-year plan's stated mission is, "To provide Ollantaytambo with the strategic guidelines to intervene, accompany and manage tourism, built by the stakeholders in a participatory manner, in pursuit

of consolidating a sustainable tourism product, where the visitor may have unique experiences based on living cultures and a well conserved natural environment, generating an improvement in the quality of life and identity of the populations involved."

There are scores of organizations participating in Plan Wallata: NGOs, government departments, schools, industry organizations, tour operators, members of the community and more.

The plan began in 2016, and will run through 2022, with the aim of making Ollantaytambo a "Living Inca Town" by promoting the preservation and conservation of its cultural and natural heritage.

The model for such an achievement is currently being played out in the village of Huilloc, a 20-minute drive from Ollantaytambo. In Huilloc, visitors can start



▲ Terraces in Ollantaytambo. (Photo: G Adventures)

their days with an allkin pachuacuy, have a chaskiq in the afternoon, and wrap up an amazing day with a sumaq puñuna.

If your Quechua is a little rusty...you could start your day with a visit to a women's weaving facility where you can learn traditional Incan weaving skills, take a four-hour trail hike through the Andes as if you were an ancient Incan delivering a message to a neighboring village in the afternoon, and wrap up your day with an overnight stay in a local family's home.

It is Plan Wallata that is allowing this Quechua-speaking village to be able to offer visitors an authentic taste of Andean village life, and keep its ancient customs alive.

While you're in Huilloc, you can also work the land using centuries-old tools, cook with local produce, participate in volunteer activities, pitch in at a local school, even witness an ancient Incan ritual.

There are now over 30 private homes (private bedrooms and modern bathrooms) where

▶ The legendary Machu Picchu (Photo: Where Next). (Photo: G Adventures)



▶ Trekking the Inca Trail. (Photo: Leo Tamburri, Planeterra)





you can stay the night with a Huilloc family. You'll enjoy home-cooked organic meals prepared with local products harvested in ancient and sustainable ways. But more than anything, you'll feel the warmth of a centuries-old Incan tradition of hospitality, and the knowledge that your visit is making a positive contribution to the local community.

Plan Wallata is in its early stages now, and, aside for the activities in Huilloc, its efforts would not be apparent to most of today's visitors. However, the plan's goal of bringing about social improvement to Ollantaytambo and its surrounding area through tourism is well underway, and will bear fruit in the years ahead. To learn more, visit: www.planwallata.org

Life between Volcanoes and Canyons

AREQUIPA



Located on the southwest coast of Peru, the region of Arequipa offers a wide variety of topographies and attractions. The Pacific coastline is dotted with popular beaches and busy ports. The Cotahuasi Canyon is believed to be the deepest in the world, at 11,598

feet, and the Colca Canyon, which is twice as deep as the Grand Canyon, is regarded as the ideal place to witness Andean condors riding the thermals. The capital city of Arequipa is the second largest city in Peru, and boasts a renowned historic center.

Photo: PROMPERU



Chaccu de Vicuñas



“Thanks to the program, I’m better able to protect my alpacas’ health and the quality of their fiber. Someday I hope to turn my small farm into an education center for others who want to improve the health of their alpacas.”

**–TIMOTEO CORDORI YERBA
FARMER AND ALPACA RANCHER**

The Great Vicuna Roundup

Not much grows at 15,000 feet above sea level. So the communities at these Andean altitudes rely on alpacas and vicuñas to earn a living. And the people at Belmond Travel are helping to make that possible.

First of all, what’s the difference between an alpaca and a vicuña? Both are camelids, but an alpaca is much larger, averaging about 6 feet in height, whereas a vicuña peaks out at under three feet. (The llama is the largest of Peru’s camelids, which can grow up to 8 feet tall.) Additionally, alpacas are domesticated, and vicuñas are wild.

Every year, the mountainous communities near Arequipa conduct a special, time-honored ceremony, Chaccu de Vicuñas. Community members take a very long, multi-colored rope up into the mountains, and use it to herd the vicuñas to a specific spot. (They use this technique so that they never have to touch the vicuñas). The ceremony includes giving thanks to Mother Earth (Pachamama), and blessing the animals.

Once the ceremony is complete, community members measure the length of the coats of the vicuñas, and those that are long enough are sheered. (It takes three years for a vicuña to grow a full coat.) Vicuña wool is extraordinarily soft, rare and expensive. And even though vicuñas are protected by the Peruvian government, these local communities have permission to responsibly harvest vicuña wool in this manner. In return, the community members patrol the mountains throughout the year, guarding against poachers.

Through its RailPeru division, Belmond helps support the annual Chaccu de Vicuñas. Belmond provides funding the ceremony, items used in the ceremony, as well as prizes for a competition between local farmers. By supporting the Chaccu de Vicuñas, Belmond is helping to preserve the cultural traditions of the past, while also helping to ensure the economic viability of the local communities for years to come.



▶ The annual Chacacu de Vicuñas. (Photo: Belmond Travel)



▶ Centuries-old weaving traditions are still practiced. (Photo: Belmond Travel)

Sibayo, Andean Community



▲ A morning stroll in Sibayo. (Photo: MINCETUR)

How Homestays Helped Enrich a Community

Sibayo (population 1,700) is known as a Ciudad de Piedra, or City of Stone. Stones from both Incan and Spanish times form many of the roads, and even some of the houses in this Andean town. Sometimes here, it feels as if the last few centuries have simply passed Sibayo by.

Less than an hour's drive from the popular tourism destination of Chivay, Sibayo is considered the beginning of the majestic Colca Canyon. Visitors here can partake of a variety of interesting treks, mountain

biking, even trout fishing with traditional, hand-made nets. But what truly sets Sibayo (12,500 feet above sea level) apart from other charming Andean towns is the opportunity for deep cultural immersion.

Visitors to Sibayo become exposed to a vast array of Incan traditions. From music and dance, to food, traditional garb, thatched roofs, dying and weaving of textiles and more. It's a true cultural immersion, much of which can be attributed to Ruth Supo Machaca.





"I am dedicated to tourism, it is an activity that I love and gives me many satisfactions. I think tourism has also empowered me as a woman."

**—RUTH SUPO MACHACA.
PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATION OF
TOURIST SERVICES OF SIBAYO
RUMILLACTA**



To learn more about Sibayo, visit www.peru.travel/en/experiences/sibayo

Ruth is presently the Coordinator and President of "Experiential Houses of the Association of Tourist Services of Sibayo "Rumillacta," a group formed in 2006 that arranges homestays for Sibayo visitors. Ruth's experience with tourism development in Sibayo, however, does not end there. She was governor and chaired the Tourism Commission of the District Council of Sibayo from 2011 to 2014. She is a sought-after speaker on the topic of community tourism.

Ruth recalls the early days of homestays in Sibayo, and how the practice has evolved. "I remember that in 2003 a first tourist fair was organized in Sibayo," she says. "Some families decided to accommodate visitors in their homes. The hosts created improvised

small spaces in their homes and offered llama leather as a coat. Slowly This started to change. In 2006, some twenty Sibayo families formed Asetur and we implement our shelter houses. Then we started promoting ourselves in tourist fairs in Lima and in the Meetings of Rural Community Tourism which the Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism organizes every year."

The homestays have had a positive impact on the lives of the participating families. According to Ruth, "Rural tourism community has allowed Asetur members to double our income. But more important is that in all Sibayo now values the traditions that were about to be lost. Householders today prefer to build houses with adobe, stone and straw



instead of using cement. And before, the women of Sibayo we dressed in divers and polo shirts, now we prefer the traditional costumes embroidered in wool and wear the collagua hat.”

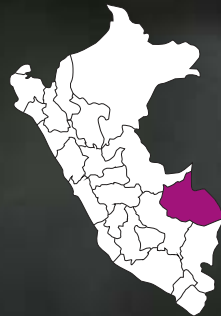
There are other ways the influx of tourism in Sibayo has helped to town hold onto its traditions. “In Sibayo,” Ruth says, “we receive visitors from Australia, Germany, the United States, and other places. The majority are people who enjoy the countryside and want to share family experiences, such as having afternoon tea and learning our customs. Tourists appreciate the crafts, the typical dances, and stay in our experiential houses We also offer a taxi service, which allows you to visit the square and other attractions on

the back of a llama. Due to the largest influx of tourists, many residents of Sibayo have retaken ancient rituals (such as land payment) and other customs ancestral musicians play the Huayllacha (traditional music of the Valley del Colca) with a bandolina or harp, and instead of beer, we prefer to drink the chayaska, which is prepared with salt and burnt sugar, pisco to taste and aromatic herbs.”

Ruth served as a model for other peruvian communities trying to develop homestay programs as a way of boosting their quality of life, and maintaining their cultural traditions.

Nature at its finest

MADRE DE DIOS



Located in southeastern Peru, the region of Madre de Dios is almost entirely low-lying Amazon rainforest. It's home to two of Peru's most spectacular natural protected areas:

Manu National Park and Tambopata National Reserve. It's also home to indigenous communities that promote ecotourism with some of the richest biodiversity in the world.

Photo: Ernesto Benavides, PROMPERU



Manu/Corridor, Extraordinary Biodiversity



▶ 155 species of amphibian call Manu home. (Photo: Ernesto Benavides, PROMPERU)



To learn more, please visit www.peru.travel/en/attractions/manu-national-park

Biodiversity on a Massive Scale

Manu National Park was recently recognized as having the greatest terrestrial species diversity on earth. This distinction was made by the Tropical Ecology Assessment and Monitoring (TEAM)—a non-profit organization that studies ecosystem health.

So, how many species are we talking about? Let's do the numbers. Manu, located in southeastern Peru, is home to: over 5,000 species of plants (including over 1,000 species of trees), 221 species of mammals, 100 species of reptile, 155 amphibian species, over 1,000 species of birds, 300 species of ants, approximately 650 species

of beetles, 210 species of fish and 1,307 species of butterflies. Whew!

One of the reasons for Manu's exceptional diversity is simply its size, over 6,600 square miles. Another is its topographical diversity. The national park contains no less than 14 distinctive ecosystems. Manu can essentially be divided into two sections: the mountains and the lowlands.

The mountainous area can reach altitudes up to 13,000 feet, while the lowland area includes part the floor of the Amazon basin. The Manu National Park was established



▼ Boats on the river at sunset. (Photo: Shutterstock)



▼ Eco lodge on the river. (Photo: Shutterstock)





in 1973. It was recognized as a Biosphere Reserve in 1977, and declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987.

Nature lovers are drawn to Manu by the possibility of citing jaguars, pumas, tapirs, giant armadillos, a whole host of monkeys, spectacled bears, macaws, condors, caimans and anacondas.

As impressive as Manu is in and of itself, it becomes even more remarkable when combined with two adjacent natural protected areas: Alto Purus National Park and Purus Communal Reserve. Collectively this area is known as the Purus-Manu corridor, and covers over 38,000 square miles—about the size of Iceland.

The Purus-Manu corridor, is the source of four of the most important river basins in the Amazon. The local population – including over 60 communities from 15 ethnic groups – depends directly on the goods and services provided by these forests, including water, food, medicine, clothing and housing. The Purus-Manu corridor is also home to some of the last groups of indigenous people in voluntary isolation and initial contact.

The area encompasses the largest extension of responsibly managed forests for timber, shiringa (vegetable latex) and other forests products. It also functions as a refuge for threatened species, such as river dolphins, and mahogany – which grows here at the highest concentration in the entire Amazon.



◀ The eyes of the jungle are always on you. (Photo: PROMPERU)

For these and many other reasons the Purus-Manu corridor has inspired action by a number of conservation organizations, including World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

WWF has been working in the Amazon for more than 40 years, and has been instrumental in a number of sustainability success stories in the Purus-Manu corridor, including providing technical help to national authorities for the creation of the natural protected areas themselves. Other successes have included:

- Supporting the development, of a Master Plan for the Alto Purus National Park. With input from many stakeholders, this plan laid out a strategy for ensuring the conservation of the park's natural resources, while allowing the neighboring populations to economically benefit from them.
- Convening key stakeholders to foster the necessary environmental commitments to

ensure the conservation of Purus' natural wealth.

- Empowering and engaging indigenous peoples in the conservation, management and economic benefits of mahogany. For years, illegal logging had brought the tree species to the brink of extinction. WWF supported a program which trained and enabled indigenous peoples to sustainably harvest mahogany seeds and legally sell them to private companies engaged in reforestation activities. Now able to earn a living from not cutting down mahogany trees, local communities have embraced their conservation.

Manu National Park provides the rare opportunity to see nature at its most diverse, and the Purus-Manu corridor is a model of the conservation success stories that can be achieved when government, local communities and private organizations strive for a common goal.

Who could say no to a hike like this? (Photo: Shutterstock)



Tambopata National Reserve



Studying Biodiversity to Protect Biodiversity

The Tambopata National Reserve is an extraordinary place. Located in southeastern Peru, in the Madre de Dios region, Tambopata is over 1,000 square miles of subtropical Amazon rainforest. The level of biodiversity here is staggering.

The reserve is home to 632 species of birds, 169 mammals and 1,200 butterflies. Additionally, the reserve is surrounded by the Bahuaja Sonene National Park on the south side, making it an important conservation area in Peru.

Sandoval Lake is the most visited attraction in the reserve due to its closeness to Puerto Maldonado (the Madre de Dios capital city, which is only half an hour away by boat). On the lake, which is home to macaws and a numerous river otter families, there are lodges for accommodation. There is also an observation tower for a panoramic view of the vast landscape.

Another attraction are the rock formations found on the river banks. Hundreds of birds (macaws, falcons and parrots) gather on the

rocks offering a spectacular sight of color and sound, particularly between 5:30 am and 9:00 am. Mammals such as wild pigs, peccary and tapirs can generally be seen at night on mountain or inland rock formations. One of these is the Colorado rock formation, the biggest in the entire Peruvian Amazon.

Tambopata is the home of the Ese Eja, an indigenous group that has lived in the area since ancient times and knows every inch of the reserve. The Ese Eja are currently organized in three communities: Palma Real, Sonene and Infierno. The latter community works together with private companies to offer diverse activities and tourism services including lodging and guided tours, among others. The project has been considered a global success, thanks to the cooperation between the community and a private company to offer a beneficial eco-tourism product.

Conservation of an area with such natural riches is a high priority to many groups and organizations, especially given the threat of illegal gold mining, which has grown lately.



▲ A boat ride on Lake Sandoval (Photo: Inkaterra)

One company focused on conservation in and around Tambopata is Inkaterra, a Peruvian hospitality company founded in 1975 by Jose Koechlin. Inkaterra built its first property, Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica, adjacent to the reserve, and shortly thereafter purchased 10,000 acres of adjacent rainforest to create the Reserva Ecologica Inkaterra.

To further conservation efforts in the area, in 1978, Inkaterra established

Inkaterra Asociacion. Self-funded through ecotourism, Inkaterra Asociación is a non-profit organization committed to scientific research as a basis for biodiversity conservation, education and the wellbeing of local communities. Since its founding, the organization has produced major flora and fauna inventories to measure its impact over its areas of influence in the Amazon rainforest of Madre de Dios and other parts of Peru.

Neotropical Blunt-headed Treesnake, or fiddle-string snake (*Imantodes Cenchoa*), found in Mexico, Central America, and South America (Photo: Inkaterra)



Inkaterra Asociación is currently operating several projects in and around Tambopata National Reserve.

SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE CORRIDOR

Human activity in the region has caused wildlife areas to occasionally become disconnected from each other. In order to improve connectivity among landscapes and ecosystems in the region, as well as land management and the reduction of mercury in water, Inkaterra Asociación has proposed the creation of a 300-square mile, sustainable landscape corridor off the Tambopata National Reserve, running from the city of Puerto Maldonado along the Madre de Dios

River, to the Peru-Bolivia border.

Sustainable landscape corridors aim to enhance the economic development of local communities through ecotourism and other activities based on the sustainable use of natural resources. Relying on strategic alliances with the U.S. Department of State, the Smithsonian Center for Conservation and Sustainability, the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), Fondo de las Américas (FONDAM) and other influential organizations, Inkaterra Asociación's new project aims to stabilize fluctuations in wildlife and assist in repairing habitat fragmentation.

► Boulenger's Bush Anole 1908 (*Polychrus lioaster*), found in Peru, Bolivia, Brazil and Ecuador (Photo: Inkaterra)



INKATERRA GUIDES FIELD STATION

This small eco-lodge, located deep in the Amazon jungle, welcomes scientists, students, volunteers and eco-conscious travelers to be part of diverse research and conservation projects overseen by Inkaterra Asociación. With four cabanas and two large pavilions, the lodge houses an Eco-Center and a lab for native flora and fauna analysis.

PALMETUM

The Palmetum is a forestry project created to study and conserve a diverse array of native palms. Studying their features and cultural meaning, the Palmetum hosts 19 of the 23 species identified by the Ese'Eja culture and

used in 340 different ways.

These species include *Geonoma deversa*, with large impermeable leaves used in local architecture for thatched roof weaving; the Yarina or ivory palm (*Phytelephas macrocarpa*), with valuable seeds employed in handcrafts; and the walking palm tree (*Socratea exorrhiza*), which moves its roots in search of sunlight.

Through permanent monitoring and species propagation in plant nurseries, scientific research in the Palmetum aims to preserve genetic diversity, while raising awareness on the role of palms in the economic development



▶ One of eight hanging bridges along the Inkaterra Canopy Walkway near Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica (Photo: Inkaterra)



“Despite knowing that Madre de Dios is one of our planet’s richest biodiversity hotspots, the Amazon rainforest never ceases to astonish us, as the place where life finds its origins. The life experience provided by the Amazon is both humbling and enriching, committing each guest to the conservancy of local cultures and wildlife.”

**–JOSE KOECHLIN
FOUNDER, INKATERRA**

Inkaterra association: www.inkaterra.com/inkaterra-asociacion-org/en/

of native communities, encouraging sustainable business opportunities to conserve the Amazon rainforest.

BIRD MONITORING

Over 500 bird species have been registered within the areas conserved by Inkaterra Asociación in the Amazon rainforest of Madre de Dios. Four monitoring techniques are practiced, such as bird banding, which allows the codification of species dynamics.

With four sampling sites, the presence of a species in a given environment can be registered, as well as its growth and reproductive phase. These and other data are shared with the Center of Ornithology and Biodiversity (CORBIDI). Inkaterra Asociación also works with local communities to protect endemic species, and provide a safe migratory route for birds flying from North America to Patagonia.

FAUNA MONITORING

A motion-sensitive camera trap system installed around the Inkaterra property allows researchers to study the behavior of native wildlife. Every month, these cameras capture over 1,000 photos of 61 different

species that include jaguar, ocelot, giant armadillo, tapir, peccarie and tamandua.

GREENLAB

Established at Inkaterra Guides Field Station, GreenLab is the first molecular biology and genetics field research laboratory set up in the Amazon rainforest. This initiative aims to explore and apply genetic research methodologies to conserve Amazonian and broader Peruvian biodiversity by local capacity building.

The devices in this laboratory are designed to withstand the most adverse conditions, while simultaneously being portable and efficient for research and conservation. Applying genetic research to biodiversity conservation will give access to previously unknown information to design and implement more effective conservation actions.

The biodiversity found in the Tambopata National Reserve is unlike that found virtually anywhere else in the world. And it’s something local communities and organizations like Inkaterra and Inkaterra Asociación are fighting hard to protect.

Keeping A Way Of Life Afloat

PUNO



The Puno region is located in the very southwestern corner of Peru, bordering Bolivia. Seventy percent of the land in the region is Andean, and the remaining 30%

Amazon rainforest. Its capital city is Puno, which is on the shore of Lake Titicaca, nestled between the lake and the surrounding mountains.

Photo: PROMPERU



Uros Titino



Water fowl abounds on Lake Titicaca. (Photo: PROMPERU)

The Floating Communities of Lake Titicaca

The Uros people live on rafts. They're large rafts, floating islands really, capable of holding 4-5 families and their houses. They're made of reeds, and they float on the waters of Lake Titicaca, as they have for centuries.

The community of Ccappi Uros Titino is located within the Titicaca National Reserve and made up of five distinct floating islands, built from totora, a reed-like plant (bulrush sedge) that grows wild in groves known as totorales around Lake Titicaca.

Four of the islands hold families, and the fifth hosts a school.

Visitors are welcome at the Ccappi Uros Titino community, which is a two-hour boat ride from Puno. Here you can see how the last descendants of the Uros preserve their customs and traditions. Not surprisingly, many of these traditions involve totora. On a visit here, you can see how the local families harvest the totora, dry it and weave it into handicrafts, and more useful items like furniture, boats, homes and the very



▲ Tortora, drying in the sun, is even used to make houses. (Photo: PROMPERU)

islands they live on. Other activities include ancestral cooking demonstrations, boat rides, bird watching, wildlife spotting and fishing in the traditional Uros manner.

In addition to keeping their cultural traditions alive, the Uros Titino community members are vigilant stewards of the totorales. The totorales serve as nurseries to many native fish species, and help stop land erosion. They provide a refuge and nesting area to various species of birds, including rallids such as Choka and Tiquicho, ducks such as Pana

duck and Puna duck, láridos like seagulls and podicipédidos like the Titicaca Diver and Pimpollo Diver, several of these species take advantage of the algae and vegetation found at the base of the totorales. On so many levels, the totorales are a critical element of the ecosystem of the Titicaca National Reserve (TNR).

Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world, is located in the Puno region, and shares a border with Bolivia. With an average altitude of 12,500 feet above sea



level, the Titicaca National Reserve stretches over 140 square miles.

This area protects Lake Titicaca's flora and fauna, contributes to the socio-economic development of the region and helps to keep alive the traditional cultures of the people who inhabit the area.

The TNR protects the lake's great biological diversity, with the most representative

species being birds, including the Titicaca duck, and the famous giant Titicaca frog, known as kelli or huankele.

The entire length of the Peruvian part of Lake Titicaca was recognized by the Ramsar Convention in 1997 as a wetland of international importance, especially as a habitat for aquatic birds.

Of the almost 3,320 square miles of the lake,



Lake Titicaca National Reserve: www.peru.travel/en/attractions/lake-titicaca
For more information please contact: turismo@sernanp.gob.pe

over half of it is in Peruvian territory. The lake itself has been divided into three zones: the Large or Chucuito Lake (928 feet deep at its deepest point), the Small or Wiñaymarca Lake and the Puno Bay.

Its main tributaries are the Ramis, Huancané, Coata, Ilave and Suches rivers. Lake Titicaca is the source of the Desaguadero river, which acts as a natural border between Peru and

Bolivia. The Uros people are blessed to live in a strikingly beautiful part of the world where they can maintain their traditional way of life with the help of the totora reeds.

They recognize, however, that this way of life is a potentially fragile one that requires eternal vigilance and ongoing conservation efforts.

Paramis



The Healing Community of Paramis

On the shores of Lake Titicaca, in the very southeastern corner of Peru, there's a small village where ancient Incan healing practices are very much alive and well.

Paramis is a tiny, quiet community of 20 families in Capachica, about a 90-minute drive from Puno. The village has become well known for keeping centuries-old traditions of medicine alive. Visitors can learn how to identify and properly pick plants that are unique to the Altiplano (Plateau) area of Peru and Bolivia, and have special medicinal purposes. Visitors are then taught how to prepare the plants to serve as “cures” for

a variety of ailments. These plants include:

- Chiri chiri (in Spanish, “grindela”)--for muscle aches and bone fractures
- High Mass (Alta Misa)--for headaches, migraines and low-grade fever
- Yahuar chonka--for heart disease and circulatory problems (the plant is believed to regulate blood pressure and tachycardia, and generally improve the heart rate). Its leaves are also used for wounds.
- Llantén--for healing internal and external wounds, also works as an anti-inflammatory and treats eye and skin irritations.



▲ Local ingredients have nutritional and healing powers. (Photo: MINCETUR)



▲ Traditional clothing. (Photo: MINCETUR)



▲ Paramis is known for its colorful textiles. (Photo: MINCETUR)

Paramis is one of the few communities in Peru still creating ancient medicines and practicing traditional medical procedures. Families here are fighting for the conservation and revaluation of medicinal, aromatic and ornamental plants, as well as the reforestation of native trees.

Four of the families who live in Paramis have set up guest rooms in their homes, where for a modest fee, you can experience day-to-day family life in the village. This includes preparing meals, and learning about the local, organic ingredients that go into them. These include potato, quinoa, barley, wheat, beans, corn and more.



“Visitors who come to our community leave very happy and grateful for the services we provide, some have shed tears when they say goodbye, since when they arrive we treat them with great familiarity and affection.”

**– BALBINO QUISPE FLORES
PARAMIS COMMUNITY TOURISM ADVOCATE**

The village strives to maintain the essence of the Andean culture through additional traditional practices and activities such as farming using ancestral tools, and the Incan ritual of giving blessings to Pachamama (Mother Earth) for her bounty. Visitors can take part in these and other ancient activities.

There are, of course, more modern-day activities visitors can enjoy in Paramis, such as trekking, fishing and boat rides around the lake.

Paramis is also known for its traditional, hand-made embroidered clothes. Jackets, vests, monteras (women’s hats), as well as the fabric of belts are all adorned with Andean iconography, and sold throughout the region.

The families of Paramis work hard to keep ancient Andean traditions alive, especially healing traditions. Being able to share them with tourists is one way they are able to help make that happen.



◀ A typical montera (woman's hat). (Photo: MINCETUR)

Darrell Wade Interview



An Interview With Darrell Wade

Prior to the crisis, PROMPERU sat down with Darrell Wade, co-founder Intrepid Travel.

With more than 1,000 adventures in over 100 countries, Intrepid Travel is the world's largest adventure travel company. Naturally, Intrepid Travel offers numerous trips to Peru, including some that feature a homestay in a traditional community on the shores of Lake Titicaca. Darrell Wade co-founded the company over three decades ago, and continues to be an evangelist for the unique experiences that can arise from responsible travel. As the Intrepid Travel website puts it, "Sustainable travel doesn't mean no fun. It means that fun can be used to benefit others."

Our first question is very broad, what is a travel company's role in advancing sustainable tourism?

Darrell Wade: Well, first of all, I should say that I don't particularly like the term, "sustainable tourism." The reason is that I think all tourism should be sustainable. I think the minute we start talking about sustainable tourism, we box ourselves into a niche.

If anything, I would be encouraging all suppliers to do the exact opposite, and say, "Hey, we are a tourism company, BUT we have a better way to travel. And that better way to travel is one that brings all stakeholders into the picture."

As a tourism company, ultimately you want to make some money so that you can, you know, pay your shareholders and pay your staff and so forth. But beyond that you want to have happy customers

How do you do that?

DW: To have happy customers, you give them great experiences. You engage them with the destination. You engage them with the local people and you give your travelers—and your staff—a sense of the future.

Let's talk about how we can engage local communities in finding a better way forward, engage our travelers, engage our staff. So bring all of your stakeholders into the journey, and that journey is a positive one.

At the same time, people are on vacation, they want to have fun.

DW: That's a really great point. People want to have a great holiday. Now, we can use sustainability to give them a great holiday, so there's not a contradiction there, but just remember that this person's on holiday, so let's lighten the load, and give them the best holiday they've ever had.

Tell us about the Intrepid Foundation.

DW: It's our primary vehicle for raising and distributing philanthropic donations. We established it for legal reasons. Australian law says if you're raising philanthropic funds, you must be a registered charity. US law is the same.

We want to use tourism as an engine for an NGO's development, so we look at the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and there's seven or eight that really relate to

tourism. There's climate change, for instance. So we ask, what can we do to reduce our carbon emissions?

Gender equality is another SDG we're trying to address. So is SDG Number 8, employment. What can organizations do to foster good quality, decently paid work, particularly in developing countries?

You have a program in Peru, Awamaki, that seems to be addressing that. It's where you're training local men to work as porters (mostly on the Inca Trail).

DW: Yes, that's a good example. Hopefully, people are getting up-skilled, and developing language skills. Most likely, they're coming from underprivileged backgrounds, and this is providing an entry point to get stable, well-paying jobs.

What role do you think the traveler has in promoting sustainable tourism?

DW: There's two stages for the traveler. There's the contemplative stage—they haven't traveled yet, but they want to. They haven't decided if they want to jump on a cruise ship with 6,000 people, or sit on a beach in Mexico, or travel around Peru.

So, in that contemplative stage, there's a responsibility for the traveler to ask, "Okay, what am I trying to achieve here?" And to a certain extent, "What are the things I'm

trying to avoid?”

So, then there’s the second stage, when the traveler arrives in the destination. The traveler wants to get maximum enjoyment out of the trip. Maybe they want to meet the people of Peru. Well, how can you do that? Maybe you talk to the staff at a restaurant. The waiter might mention a particular museum, or a particular handicrafts store. It’s how you approach things and how you behave as a traveler.

Your communications do a nice job of promising a great experience, while planting the seeds of responsible travel. Care to comment on that?

DW: Our role is to get people out of classic, mainstream travel, and get them travelling better. You get people off the cruise lines, out of the tour buses, out of the resorts, they travel with us, and they go, “Oh my God, this is a so much better way to travel.” And this starts to change their thinking as to what is their role as a part of the world.

Where do you see tourism, and sustainable tourism going in the future?

DW: To a certain extent, I think the trends we’re seeing now will just continue. I think more companies like us will continue to grow for the next five years. Also, large companies like Hilton or Royal Caribbean

will continue to grow, as well.

Within that tourism space, I think there will be a heightened shift toward sustainability. Now, whether that’s through the UN and SDGs, or carbon emissions, or governments and taxing issues, or through media exposure of that practice, or clients driving an expectation of higher standards. Probably a bit of all of the above.

Will travel and sustainable travel ultimately just become one?

DW: That’s the dream, isn’t it? Travel is sustainable, so it’s not sustainable travel, per se, it’s just travel, but it happens to be at a very sustainable level. It creates great societal outcomes--doesn’t do damage.

If we can take a person to Peru, and they can experience that country, they start to think differently about issues of race and color, and environment and so forth. So when they come back to their day job in Los Angeles, they start to change their behaviors and think about the world differently.



▶ A traditional Puno farm. (Photo: MINCETUR)

Conclusion



As you can see, the principles of sustainable tourism have found a welcoming home in Peru. The stories you've read here, however, are just the tip of the iceberg. There are numerous other stories of environmental responsibility, cultural preservation and economic development going on in the

Peruvian travel/tourism industry. Even though international travel may not be possible at this moment, we look forward to the day when it is again safe to travel, and we can share some of those with you. In the meantime, stay safe and be well.



Photo: WWF US



PERU



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