

Our Favorite Memories

Peru & Machu Picchu

By Tour Leader Kellie Fennessy

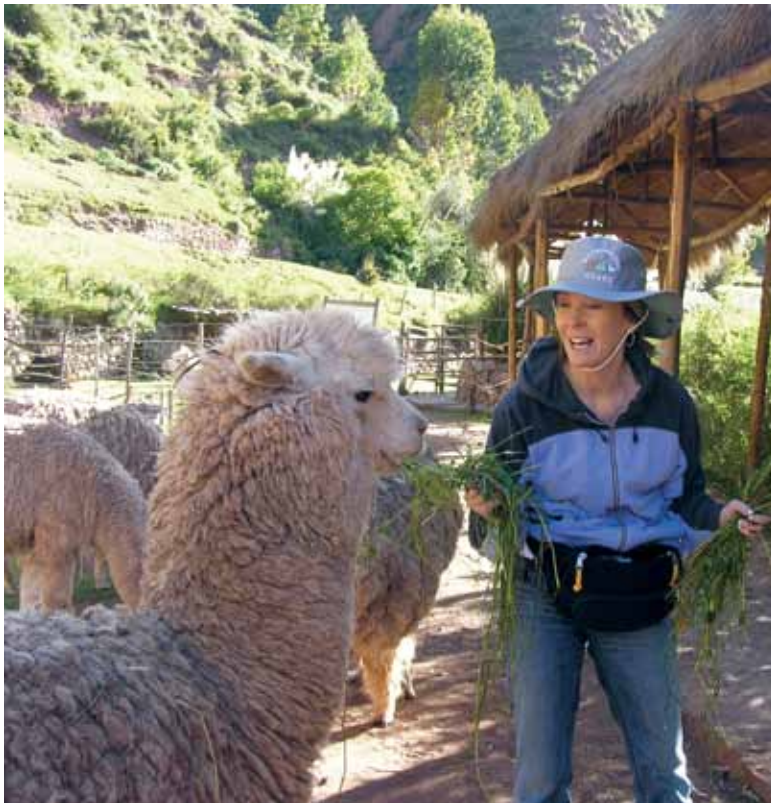
WTT's tour to Peru was originally planned for February but due to adverse weather conditions causing all sorts of problems, our group didn't gather until April to explore this fascinating country. When one thinks of Peru, Machu Picchu the "Lost City of the Incas" typically comes to mind. For all of us on this trip Machu Picchu was certainly a site we all looked forward to seeing, but each of us left Peru with much more than just the experience and memories of the Inca ruins.

Peru is a stunningly beautiful country with palm trees swaying on the coast leading to foothills blanketed in lush green vegetation which climb ever upward to the majestic snow capped peaks of the Andes. We saw the ancient ruins of the powerful Inca Empire and witnessed the strong influence of Spain on the country's architecture and culture.

Words can't explain and pictures don't do justice to the very special places we visited. Staying at Arawna Resort in the Sacred Valley was a treat many of us will not forget. What a gorgeous place to start our visit to the Sacred Valley of the Incas! We wanted to hit "pause" and just take in all the beauty of this new resort—not to mention visiting the spa for a few choice treatments. But Machu Picchu called and it did not disappoint. Your senses are taken over when entering Machu Picchu as all the magical pictures you've seen are suddenly before you in living color. We all just had to stop and take a breath, and then, of course, our cameras came out as we tried to capture what we were experiencing.



The Arawna Resort in the Sacred Valley.



One day we visited an Alpaca farm. These smaller, gentle cousins of the lammas (both members of the camel family) are raised for their soft hair which is woven into clothing and blankets.

Many photos of Machu Picchu feature a tall peak overlooking the site—Hauyna Picchu—thought to be the residence of the Incan high priest. Seven of our group climbed the stone stairs up Hauyna Picchu, huffing and puffing in the high altitude. At the top, Machu Picchu was laid out below us on a carpet of greens and browns. As we caught our breath from the climb and altitude, thin layers of clouds floated in—it was a truly magical moment.

One would never think of Peru as a culinary heaven but oh is it! We had one delicious meal after another. The obvious care and pride taken in the preparation not only made the food taste great but the presentation often made our meals consumable works of art. I can positively say that the last dinner in Cusco at Ciccoliona was absolutely one of the best restaurant meals I have ever enjoyed!

But ultimately, having a great travel experience is due to the people you travel with. The 15 travelers that joined WTT were beautiful people themselves. I was so fortunate to come home with 15 lively, fun, adventurous, intelligent and interesting ladies to call my friends. We all want to travel together again. I hope we have that opportunity soon. ❖

See next page for more photos....



Lima Cathedral reflects Peru's Spanish influence.



Exploring Cusco, the historic capital of the Inca Empire and an UNESCO World Heritage site.



Peruvian children at the alpaca farm.



Left: Three travelers taking a break on the climb to the peak of Hauyna Picchu which towers over 1,000 feet above Machu Picchu.

Above: The view from Hauyna Picchu once we arrived—it took our breath away literally and figuratively—but oh, what a sight!

