TOUR CODE

PR2

ADVENTURESABROAD

PERU: NORTH & SOUTH

featuring Nazca, Arequipa, the Colca Canyon, Titicaca & Machu Picchu

20 days

Updated 06/01/2013

Day 1 *Arrive in Lima*

Today we arrive in Lima, Peru.

In recent years, this city has undergone some wonderful restorations of the plazas, ornate facades, and wooden balconies for which it is famous. Named the 'City of Kings' by the Spanish Conquistadors, Lima is the capital of Peru. Founded in 1535 by Francisco Pizarro, where the River Rimac meets the Pacific Ocean, this was the most important Spanish city during the colonial era with a population of about 100,000 inhabitants. Today the city is home to more than 7 million
people.

Overnight in Lima (Miraflores). Hotel Exclusive or similar. Meal plan: Dinner, if required.

Day 2 *Lima - Nazca Lines Scenic Overflight*

We have an early morning* private transfer to the bus station for the Cruz del Sur or Ormeno Royal Class public bus to Nazca (6-7 hrs). We have an arrival transfer from Nazca bus station to the Casa Andina hotel. After a brief break for refreshment, you will head directly to the small airport to board your scenic overflight of the 2,000 year old Nazca Lines, comprised of about three hundred figures made of straight lines and geometric shapes most clearly visible from the air.

The lines were supposedly built by an ancient civilization called the Nazca, though no one knows for sure who built them or why. Since their discovery, the Nazca Lines have inspired fantastic explanations from ancient gods, a landing strip for returning aliens, a celestial calendar, used for rituals probably related to astronomy, or a map of underground water supplies. Your total flying time will be about one hour; the total time spent over the lines themselves will be approximately 25-35 minutes.

After the flight we drive back to our hotel in Nazca.

* Given the early morning departure, passengers with flight routings that land in Lima late on Day 1 might consider arriving a day earlier.

Overnight in Nazca. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 3 *Nazca - Ica*

After breakfast, we visit the Maria Reiche Museum. Maria Reiche (1903-1998) was a German-born mathematician and archaeologist famous for her research on the Nazca Lines. We then drive from Nazca to Ica and check into the Hotel Las Dunas. Our afternoon is free to enjoy the surroundings or visit the Ica Regional Museum.

This evening we drive to Huacachina, built around a small lake in the desert. Called the "Oasis of America," it serves as a resort for local families from the nearby city of Ica. Legend holds that the lagoon was created when a beautiful native princess was apprehended at her bath by a young hunter. She fled, leaving the pool of water in which she had been bathing to become a lagoon.

Return to Ica.

Overnight in Ica. Hotel Las Dunas. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 4 *Ica - Ballestas Islands - Lima*

This morning we travel to Paracas and enjoy a boat trip to the spectacular Ballestas Islands, often described as Peru's answer to the Galapagos. Though they don't quite match the splendour of their northern cousins, they are quite spectacular in their own right. The islands have been eroded to form countless natural caves and arches. In fact, this is where the islands' name comes from -- the word Ballesta means 'bow' (as in archery). There are colonies of thousands of seabirds such as pelicans, Inca terns and cormorants as well as a small colony of Humboldt penguins. You will also see hundreds of sealions and often schools of dolphin.

We return to Paracas and the take the bus north, arriving back in Lima late afternoon. Tonight we meet other incoming group members who are not participating in the Nazca extension.

Overnight in Lima (Miraflores). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 5 *Lima: City Tour*

This morning we start our tour with a visit to San Francisco's Church to visit the extensive catacombs that lie underneath. We then continue to the Plaza de Armas, the most important plaza in Lima. The oldest surviving part of the plaza is the impressive bronze fountain, which was erected in 1650. Surrounding the plaza is the exquisite Archbishop's Palace, the cathedral, and the Government Palace where handsomely uniformed presidential guards are on duty all day. We visit the cathedral where the great conquistador Francisco Pizarro's tomb lies.

After taking some free time for lunch in one of the many outdoor cafes, we head to the trendy area of Miraflores, where people love to stroll along the cliff tops overlooking beaches, and watch the sun setting on the Pacific Ocean. The best location is the new "Love Park" with its magnificent monument to lovers at its centre.

We then proceed to the Larco Museum, which showcases remarkable chronological galleries and an excellent overview on 3,000 years of development of Peruvian pre-Columbian history. Located in a unique vice-royal mansion of the 18th century built over a 7th century pre-Columbian pyramid, is surrounded by beautiful gardens. Features the finest gold and silver collection from ancient Peru and the famous erotic archaeological collection, one of the most visited Peruvian tourist attractions. For an unforgettable experience, Larco is one of the few museums in the world where visitors can also choose to enter the storage area with its 45,000 classified archaeological objects.

Overnight in Lima (Miraflores). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 6 *Lima - Trujillo*

Early this morning we transfer to the airport for our flight to Trujillo.

On arrival we embark upon a full day of sightseeing. Fifteen minutes south of Trujillo is the enormous adobe constructions built by the Mochica culture in the 5th century. The Temple of the Sun is considered the largest adobe pyramid in Peru, and the Temple of the Moon houses an extensive burial ground and some fine polychrome murals in which their deity is often printed.

We proceed to Huanchaco beach, frequented by beach-goers and surfers. You will have the opportunity to appreciate, during lunch, the local fishermen surfing the waves in their traditional "Caballitos de Totora", little reed boats used for fishing since pre Inca times by northern Peruvians.

This afternoon we visit Chan Chan, the largest mud archaeological complex of pre-Hispanic America and the ancient capital of the Chimu Empire (13th Century). We visit the Temple del Arco Iris (rainbow), the site museum, and the Tshudi Palace.

This evening is free for you to explore the town square.

Overnight in Trujillo. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 7 *Trujillo - Chiclayo*

This morning we travel by bus to Chiclayo.

On arrival we have a full day of sightseeing, including the Sican Museum, built to exhibit, research, protect, disseminate and preserve the Sican culture (750 and 1150 AD).

We then pay a visit to the Tucume Pyramids archaealogical site. Within the 81-acre complex rise 26 adobe pyramids, the oldest dating back to 700 AD. One of the most awe-inspiring is similar in volume to the great Egyptian pyramids. The archaeology reveals that the valley was occupied by the Mochicas in a very early stage, developing a complex culture based in maritime trade, fishing and agriculture. The late stages reveal an ample contact of this valley with the Chimu kingdom of Chan Chan, located about 320 km (200 miles) south.

Overnight in Chiclayo. Meal plan: Breakfast and lunch.

Day 8 *Chiclayo - Lima*

This morning we visit the Museo Tumbas Reales (Museum of Royal Tombs) of Sipan. With an architecture inspired by the Moche pyramids, subdued lighting and traditional music played on pre-Hispanic instruments, the museum creates a meditative mood for contemplating the past as revealed by the richest collection ever discovered in Peru.

Early this evening we fly to Lima (we must overnight in Lima due to flight schedules).

Overnight in Lima. Meal plan: Breakfast and lunch.

Day 9 *Lima - Arequipa*

This morning we transfer to the airport for our flight to Arequipa, set at the foot of snow-capped El Misti Volcano and located at an elevation height of 2325 m / 7,700 ft. This beautiful city is built largely of sillar, a kind of white volcanic stone, hence its nickname the "White City."

Later today we visit the Museo Santuarios Andinos Universidad Catolica Santa Maria-Cervesur to see "Juanita," the frozen mummy of a young Inca girl, discovered in 1995 on Mt. Ampato. Juanita died more than 500 years ago, a sacrificial offering to the Inca gods. Her body was preserved by the freezing temperatures on the mountain and is kept in a refrigerated case in the museum.

Overnight in Arequipa. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 10 *Arequipa*

This morning we have a half-day city tour, including the Santa Catalina Convent, the Plaza de Armas, the Jesuit church of La Compania and its beautifully-painted chapel, the Church of San Francisco; San Lazaro's District, Selva Alegre and the typical districts of Cayma and Yanahuara for a magnificent view of the Misti Volcano.

Afternoon at leisure to enjoy Arequipa's colonial charm and friendly inhabitants.

Overnight in Arequipa. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 11 *Arequipa - Colca Canyon - Chivay*

We have an early start to drive to the Colca Canyon, the deepest canyon in the world. This awesome route treats you to views of the famous El Misti conical mountain, numerous snowcapped volcanoes, and moon-like high passes. Wildlife is also very unique here with herds of llamas, alpacas, and sometimes the elusive vicuna; high lagoons full of Andean flamingos, and occasional vizcachas--the long tailed Andean rabbit.

Colca's pre-Inca terraces rise straight up the canyon and ancient tombs can be found perched on vertical canyon walls. Our drive takes us back in time, through 400-year old colonial towns where residents raise potatoes and tend sheep according to the rising and setting of the sun.

We overnight in the charming mountain town of Chivay (3700 m / 12,200 ft). In the afternoon we have free time to visit thermal and medical baths and acclimatize to the altitude before our busy sightseeing day tomorrow.

Overnight in Chivay. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 12 *Colca Canyon Area*

After breakfast, very early in the morning, we drive to the Cruz del Condor (Condor's Cross), a natural observation point from where the magnitude of the Colca Canyon and the spectacular flight of the majestic condor can be appreciated. Because the valley is so deep, the rising winds are very strong and big condors take advantage of them to soar gracefully into the sky. Between Maca and Cabanaconde where winds are even stronger, the observation point is perfect for condor watching.

On the way back to Chivay, we visit the Mirador of Chinina where we will find the famous Hanging Tombs and the Hanging Bridge of Sifon that joins the town of Yanque with Coporaque. At the town of Yanque we visit its beautiful church and its characteristic stone streets.

Overnight in Chivay. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 13 *Chivay - Puno*

After breakfast overland departure to Puno, a easy drive on good roads that take us over a high pass with a summit at 4700 m / 15,500 ft.

Our route take us through the Andes mountains and typical villages, beautiful landscapes and lagoons. After midday we will arrive to Sillustani, located near Umayo lake. Here we have some of the best ruins in the region consisting of the Chullpas, huge funerary monuments built by the Collas to keep their mortal remains. These circular towers exceeds 12 meters high and challenge the laws of equilibrium since they have a smaller diameter in the base than they do at the top.

We arrive in Puno late afternoon and transfer to our hotel. Puno, at 3830m (12,562 feet), is the main settlement on the Peruvian shore of Lake Titicaca and the highest place on our tour in which we will spend some time.

Overnight in Puno. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 14 *Puno: Floating Islands*

This morning we have a boat excursion to the floating islands of Los Uros. The Uros people began their floating existence centuries ago in an effort to isolate themselves from their rivals, the Collas and the Incas. Today about 300 people live on the islands. The islands are constructed from many layers of floating tortora reeds which grow in the shallow waters of Lake Titicaca. The reeds rot away from the bottom and are replaced at the top, so the ground is soft and springy as you walk over it. Even the buildings on the islands are made of tortora; indeed the whole life of the Uros people revolves around the reeds. They even eat the lower stalk and root, which is supposed to taste like celery. Today the Uros live mainly from fishing, including catching the giant pejerray which can grow up to 13.5 kg / 30 lb.

Return to Puno with the afternoon at leisure. Puno is the greatest centre of Peruvian folk dancing and traditional instruments; the markets and streets are bustling with the brightly coloured costumes of the different groups of the region.

Overnight in Puno. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 15 *Puno - "Train of the Andes" - Cuzco*

Today we take the The Venice Simplon Orient-Express "Train of the Andes" from Puno to Cuzco.

At 4321 m (14,260 ft) above sea level, we reach the highest point on our journey, a cold, remote place whose surrounding snow-draped peaks are often shrouded by mist or fine rain, and whose eerie silence is at least partly attributable to eardrums blocked by the dizzying altitude. This is a wild, high, windswept and sunburnt prairie of isolated communities of shepherds and cattle farmers, wedged between the two distant branches of the Andes visible occasionally on either horizon when not melting completely with the giant cumulus clouds that dominate the skyline.

The train then begins to descend, past La Raya to the thermal baths at Aguas Calientes. The last half of the journey is dominated by magnificent Andes Mountains, towering over the deep valleys of the meandering Huatanay River. Approaching Cuzco, our train follows the river through green fields dotted with willow trees and eucalyptus groves, past outlying communities gathered around colonial churches that conceal their artistic treasures behind crumbling adobe facades.

Cuzco is nestled towards the western end of this well-watered valley at 3310 m (10,923 ft) above sea level.

Overnight in Cuzco. Meal plan: Breakfast and lunch.

Day 16 *Cuzco - Urubamba Valley - Yucay*

This morning we visit the Inca ruins of Ollantatambo, which are located on a spectacular ridge with deep valleys on either side. From here can be seen many Inca storage warehouses hanging onto the valley walls. We can also admire the carefully constructed and maintained farming terraces which climb the surrounding hillsides. The Incas believed that the river flowed into the cosmos and became part of the Milky Way. Located 600 metres / 1,968 feet below Cuzco, the Urubamba Valley, with careful cultivation, was able to grow 70 different crops and support the population of the great capital city of the Incas.

We continue to Yucay, an attractive little town of particularly fertile lands whose name translated into Spanish means "deceit" or "bewitchment". According to the legends, in the middle of the 15th century, the Inca Huayna Capac were captivated by the incomparable magnificence of Yucay's settings and decided to settle there. Two physical elements turned Yucay into the favourite place of the Incas: the softness of its weather and the magnificence of its landscape.

Overnight in Yucay. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 17 *Yucay - Train to Machu Picchu*

We transfer to the Ollanta train station and depart for Machu Picchu via VISTADOME train service. From the Machu Picchu train station a bus will take us on the 6 km (4 miles) twisting journey up the mountainside to the site of Machu Picchu.

Machu Picchu, popularly known as the 'Lost City of the Incas,' is an ancient city of stone palaces, towers, temples and staircases. It is a very mysterious place, and to this day our knowledge of it remains sketchy. The outside world was unaware of its existence until 1911 when an American historian, Hiram Bingham, stumbled upon it almost by accident. Little is known about the site because it was never discovered by the Spanish and no mention of it in any writings. The site also appears to have been abandoned by the Incas long before the Spanish arrived. There are no records or artifacts on the site to indicate what any of the buildings were used for. Since 1985, a number of astonishing discoveries have been made at the site. Archaeologists have ascertained that the site was most likely a ceremonial centre and possibly used for administrative purposes for the populous region.

Upon arrival we have a guided walking tour of the ruins of Machu Picchu. We will enter the site through the House of the Terrace Caretakers, which flank the agricultural sector. Once on the site, we will see, among other features, the Temple of the Sun, the Fountain Caretaker's House, the Royal Sector, and the puzzling Temple of the Three Windows. We will also see the Common District, the Sacred Rock and the prison-like Temple of the Condor.

Overnight at Aguas Calientes. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 18 *Machu Picchu Area - Train to Cuzco*

A large part of the beauty of Machu Picchu is created by its setting on a mountain top surrounded by deep valleys. By staying for a second day to visit Machu Picchu -- rather than simply visiting as a day trip from Cuzco, we are able to savour the atmosphere of this very special place.

In the early morning of our second day at Machu Picchu, most group members choose to take the bus back up to the

site with the weather-dependent hope of seeing mist-clad mountains greet the morning sun. Weather notwithstanding, the best thing about going up the second day is being there early when there are fewer people, allowing time to "soak it in" and the opportunity to perhaps climb Huayna Picchu and/or to the Sun gate (approximate optional costs to revisit the site today: bus 12 USD round trip, and 40 USD site entrance, payable locally).

During our time at Machu Picchu, we will include a visit to the Manuel Chavez Ballon Site Museum. The museum focuses on the "discovery", excavation, and history of Macchu Picchu. On display are historical photos, including photos of Hiram Bingham at Machu Picchu shortly after he came across the ruins, informative write-ups on the construction of Machu Picchu and the life of the Incas, and artifacts found at the site. Outside the museum is a very lush botanical garden running along the river. Some plants are labeled and there are a few short trails. This is a nice shady area to rest on a hot day. It is an easy 25 minute walk from Aguas Calientes down the road leading the Machu Picchu.

Later in the afternoon we board the direct non stop VISTADOME train from Aguas Calientes to Cuzco. On route we will see the locals working their potato and grain fields and children at play near their adobe brick homes.

Overnight in Cuzco. Meal plan: Breakfast and lunch.

Day 19 *Cuzco Area*

This morning we drive to Pisac, about 32 km / 20 miles from Cuzco. Pisac is an Andean village which has a colourful, lively market where you will see traditionally dressed locals with whom you can barter for colourful craft items. You will see many unique Andean musical instruments as well as dazzling textiles. Peruvian woollen items are justifiably famous for their imaginative designs, based on Inca art and the local flora and fauna. You can buy sweaters and caps made from the extremely warm wool of Alpacas and Llamas.

We then continue to some of the most important Inca sites in the Cuzco area. Sacsayhuaman is an impressive building which, like so many others of that time, had both a religious and military purpose. The fortress known as the 'storehouse of the sun' incorporates some of the largest stones ever used in a building. The zig-zag walls represent the teeth of the sacred puma and provide an excellent defensive structure. The stones fit so perfectly together without mortar that not even moss can grow in the cracks. We also visit ruins at Tambo Machay, Puca Pucara and Qenko. The latter is an Inca sacrificial site carved with inscriptions.

In the afternoon we return to Cuzco and enjoy a tour of the town. We visit Coricancha, the temple of the sun which was the most important location in the Inca empire. Entombed in the closed cloister of the Sto Domingo Church, these sacred walls were hidden from modern civilization until the colonial walls were brought down in 1950 by a powerful earthquake. We also visit the church of San Blas with its fabulously carved pulpit. Wandering the narrow streets of the San Blas artisan region we make our way to the cathedral which towers impressively over the Plaza Mayor. Inside we find precious paintings from the Cuzco School of Art, one of the most prolific of its era.

This Inca city was laid out around a great central square in the shape of a puma, the god of lightning. Today, stone walls built by the Incas line most of Cuzco's central streets and form the foundations of colonial and modern buildings. The Inca buildings were so well built that the Spaniards simply knocked down the upper parts of the Inca temples and palaces and built their churches and mansions on top of the Inca walls. Shortly after the Spanish conquest, the capital was moved to Lima on the coast. Thus Cuzco has retained a wonderful, untouched colonial atmosphere. The culture is also very much alive here and is evident in the music, clothing and handicrafts of the people.

We have dinner at a local restaurant where we can try some typical Peruvian dishes. One may wish to try the "pisco sour", a drink made with a Peruvian liquor distilled from white grapes.

Overnight in Cuzco. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 20 *Cuzco - Lima - Departure*

Fly from Cuzco to Lima. Departure from Lima.

LAND ONLY CLIENTS: In order to provide adequate connection time, please ensure that your return flight home from Lima does NOT depart earlier than 9:00 p.m.

Meal plan: Breakfast.