

Peru Trip Report - The Northern Highlands

By Linda and Chuck, s/v Jacaranda

August 3 - August 14, 2013

Overview - The Northern Highlands is a hidden kingdom that is off the beaten track. As one journalist commented: "Hard to get to, hard to forget". That's why there are so few tourists, even today, because it is a "pain to get to". Here is a description from one of the travel websites: "This area used to be hidden for most tourists, but is slowly getting more known, thanks to its perfect combination of natural and historical highlights. It is the area of the orchids, giant waterfalls, unique bird species, colonial villages, and hundreds of remains from the Chachapoyas Culture. Many of these places are (still) hidden away, which makes the Chachapoya area a new paradise for trekkings."

Itinerary: Tarapoto, Chachapoyas, Karajima Sarcaphagi (day trip), Cocachimba (Gocta Falls), Kuelap (day trip), Huembo

Exchange Rate: \$1 dollar = 2.78 soles (<http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>)

Resources/Extra Reading about Northern Highlands, Peru

Book:

Chachapoyas, The Cloud People by Morgan Davis, 1988

Articles:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/14/travel/detouring-to-peru-s-past.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

<http://researcharchive.calacademy.org/research/library/biodiv/biblio/chachapoya.htm>

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0009/feature1/index.html>

Tour companies (with good descriptions):

<http://www.north-peru.com/en/destinations/chachapoyas/chachapoyas.html>

<http://www.kuelapperu.com/north-of-peru/san-martin-orchids.html>

Videos:

Peru's Mass Grave Mystery (National Geogrpahic) (2008) - Kuelap.

<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/channel/explorer/galleries/episode-perus-mass-grave-mystery/at/explorer-peru-mass-grave-mystery-3-784/>

Lost Warriors of the Clouds (1999)- <http://www.terranoa.com/english/fiche-detail.php?id=1226>

Cliff Mummies of the Andes (2004) (History Channel)- <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1755330/>

Getting There - We flew from Arequipa to the Tarapoto airport, through Lima. Airfare reservations were made online through CheapOair. The total trip length on LAN Peru was 4 hours (which included an hour layover in Lima) and cost \$325/per person. We took a taxi from the airport to our hotel in Tarapoto.

TARAPOTO (elevation 356 meters)

Hotel

El Mirador Hotel - elmiradorentarapoto.blogspot.com

San Pablo de la Cruz 517

Telma is the proprietor and she will shower you with grandmotherly love.

Double in the annex with air conditioning, hot showers, cable TV (breakfast included) s/ 100.

Restaurants

La Alternativa - bar with strange elixirs

Grau 401

La Patarashca

www.lapatarashca.com

San Pablo de la Cruz 362

Second floor dining room, screened from the street by blooming bouganvillas, is atmospheric and fun. Good regional Amazon cuisine.

Cafe d'Mundo

Calle de Morey 157

Sexy, romantic atmosphere

Good pizza

Getting There - Transport From Tarapoto to Chachapoyas: First leg was a 7 hour ride from Tarapoto to Pedro Ruiz. - s/ 34 each for a public mini-van. I bought the tickets the day before by taking a tricicle (mototaxi) (arranged by Telma) to get them in advance at Turismo Selva. Left the next day at (August 6) at 10 a.m. Had assigned seats in the crowded van. We had to change in Pedro Ruiz in order to get to Chachas. The bus from Pedro Ruiz took about an hour.

CHACHAPOYAS (elevation

Chachapoyas, known as "Chachas", is the capital of the Amazonas province.

Amazonas Street is closed to traffic - nice walking street from the Main Plaza uphill.

Hotel

Casa Vieja Hostal

Jr. Chincha Alta #569

s/290 for 2 nights - Aug 6- 8

Good location near the main square; nice enough; room off a pretty courtyard with a pretty general sitting room and cafe next store

Terra Mia Cafe next door was where we ate breakfast (included)

051-041-477353

reservas@casaviejaperu.com

www.casaviejaperu.com

Chachapoyas Backpackers Hostel www.chachapoyasbackpackers.com

Dos de Mayo 639

Cell Phone - 975819867

chachapoyasbackpackers@gmail.com

Owners who live on site are Jose Lloja, wife Dona, and son Jose Jr.

They treat you like family and the hostel is well sited near the center.

Restaurants

Cafe Fusiones

Owned by a young couple with baby

Good coffee - and some for sale -

Jr. Chincha Alta 445

041-479170

www.cafefusiones.com

cafefusiones@hotmail.com

Lunch on 8/8/2013 - 17.50

Sells their coffee called Bio Cafe - ecological coffee grown in Peru 2 hours from Chachapoyas (Guayabamba Valley, COOPARM Cooperativ - Cooperativa Agraria)

La Tushpa Restaurant

Ortiz Arrieta 753

Good steakhouse but the service was so appallingly bad that it was almost entertaining. The father (owner) would walk back and forth from the kitchen to the customer tables with one paper at a time, seemingly with nothing to do while the wait for food delivery and even the bill was interminable.

Q' Rico

Dos de Mayo 631

Great basic cheap dinner; filled with locals

Panificadora San Jose

Ayacucho 816 -good bakery

Instituto Nacional de Cultura Museo

Ayacucho 904

- small but free museum with a few mummies and ceramics.

Orchid garden

Mirador over a canyon area -Cañon del Soche

Karajia Sarcaphogi (visited from Chachapoyas)

Travel Agency: Turismo Explorer (arranged by Chacahpoyas Backpackers Hostal)

Jr. Grau 509

Phone 041-478162

Cell 952977904

August 7, 2013 - Had a car with a driver and our guide was a young German guy - very knowledgeable but a little arrogant. Left at 10 a.m.

s/220 total, not including the entry which was s/5.00 per person (goes to the local community)

COCACHIMBA (GOCTA FALLS)

Hotel:

Gocta Andean Lodge

www.goctalodge.com

info@goctalodge.com

(42) 526694

cell Lodge 942-959661

Owner: Lluís Dalmau Gutsens (ldalmau@perutresnortes.com)

Simple \$179, Double \$219, Suite \$319

We stayed in a suite for two nights (#2) because they had no double available and were given a 10% discount for one night and charged the price of a double for another night.

Moved to Room #8 for 3 nights

The owner and his 10 year old son were there at the same time.

Stayed for 5 nights - August 9 - 13 (2 nites in the suite, 3 nights in double room #8).

Confusion at checkout - Luckily we had kept our own tab since Ina, the manager, only had a notebook to write expenses in and we had a big discrepancy at first.

Total fee - 5 nights with some dinners and lunches (breakfasts included) \$1973.

Wilson - wonderful birding tour guide (no english) from the village. \$150.

Food totaled s/825

Kuelap -

Took a private tour (driver) arranged by Gocta Lodge - \$300.00

Entrance fee: s/30 includes a mandatory guide

Long 3 hour ride from Gocta - spectacular scenery on the way there as you climb up to the ruins' high perch

Once there, you hire a local guide - a nice mid-age woman from the town of Kuelap just below the ruins (she showed us her farm from the top).

Huembo (elevation 7000 feet)

The Huembo Reserve is located right on the highway between Pomacochas and Pedro Ruiz. There are two buildings: a Visitors Center and a “lodge” for overnight guests with two rooms and a shared bathroom.

Santos Montenegro Tautajulca or Tantajulca?

kolibri_huembo@hotmail.com

Movistar - 973955697

Claro - 993392288

Abra Patricia and Huembo Reserves

American Bird Conservancy

ECOAN (Asociacion Ecosistemas Andinos)

Pretty Bird Reserve Network Guidebook with \$250 donation to ABC

ABC

PO Box 249

The Plains, VA 20198-0249