

Peruvian Andes and Amazon

Exploration of Traditional Medicine and Natural Healers
September 18th-September 28th, 2010

Machu Picchu Extension
September 29th-October 2nd, 2010

A note: All of our itineraries are flexible. Our philosophy at Crooked Trails is to let the country guide our experiences and not to live by a strict itinerary. If unexpected events arise, we may change plans to take advantage of the situation or deal with an issue. However, we will do all we can to offer you everything that is on the schedule. Please be flexible yourself and allow the program to unfold.

** Meals included in the program cost are listed as B (breakfast), L (lunch) and D (dinner) for each day.

DAY ONE: FLIGHT TO LIMA

Upon your arrival, you will be welcomed by a driver and brought to your guesthouse, in the heart of the San Miguel district, near the cliffs of the Pacific Ocean. Flights generally arrive late from the US so you will check into your rooms and rest.

DAY TWO: PUERTO MALDONADO IN THE AMAZON/ SHAMAN'S HOUSE

Early morning flight to Puerto Maldonado where you will be met by your guide from Rainforest Expeditions, a Peruvian owned tour operator who work with the Ese' ja native community. For the next few days you will be living and learning from the Ese' ja tribal community of the Amazon, discovering one of the world's richest resources for botanical medicine. In addition to learning about the prolific flora and fauna of the

Peruvian rainforest, your English-speaking guide from the community of Infierno on the Tambopata River will provide unsurpassable wildlife spotting skills and an insight into daily life in the forest and traditional knowledge. Skirting Puerto Maldonado, you will drive 20 kilometers to the Tambopata River Port, entering the Native Community of Infierno. Close to the port, lies the community of Infierno's hub. Although homes are scattered over 10,000 hectares, the "hub" centralizes the shared infrastructure – school, store, medical post, and meeting room. Research on Infierno and a site visit are used to learn techniques to characterize agricultural systems, gender differentiation of roles, family health care and education, traditional values and ceremonies, government, and attitudes towards development and ecotourism. In the afternoon, we will travel fifteen minutes from the community's hub to a family's home where a group of community members have build a fish farm. They have invested in two ponds where they keep both Gamitana and Pacotana, two local species of fish. Around the ponds they have built facilities for soccer and volleyball, a small restaurant and restrooms with showers. Their property is located next to a small creek where swimming is allowed. An interesting example of entrepreneurship among community members and here you can all swim, swing on the tree swing into the water and take the small dugout canoes down the river. In the later afternoon, we will go by motorized canoe to our overnight destination at the shaman's native garden center, Centro Nape. The Centro Ñape is a communal organization that produces medicines out of forest plants and administers them to patients who choose their little clinic. They have produced a trail which explains the different medicinal (and other) uses of selected plants and we will spend time with the shaman learning about native plants. There are many known plants in the Amazon already commercial use, like Papaya, which is commonly used to aid in digestion. Others like *huito*, *clavo huasca* and *mapacho* may sound less familiar. All of them have unique healing properties, and some are used ceremoniously. In the evening we will board the canoe to head upstream to the Posadas Amazonas where you will be greeted by the manager and learn a little more about the joint venture tourism partnership shared by Rainforest Expeditions and the native community of Infierno. Overnight at lodge. **B,L,D**

DAY THREE: HANDS-ON WITH SHAMAN

After breakfast, we will board the canoe back to the Centro Nape. We will spend day two in with the native shaman at the center learning about the medicinal uses of plants. We will spend time with him and potentially some of his clients (if anyone comes in) and we will work in his lab creating different elixirs, tinctures and potions, as well as learning applications of these items according to patient's symptoms. This opportunity to observe and participate in Peruvian traditional medicine in practice will inspire and invigorate your own awareness of health and spirit. Back to the lodge in the early evening for a sunset climb of the 30 meter scaffolding canopy tower. From atop you obtain spectacular views of the vast expanses of standing forest cut by the Tambopata River winding through the middle. Now and then toucans, parrots or macaws are seen flying against the horizon, or mixed species canopy flocks land in the treetop next to you. **B,L,D**

DAY FOUR: HALF-DAY WITH SHAMAN. LAST NIGHT IN AMAZON

Early morning we will rise to join our native guide for a short boat and hike to Tres Chimbadas. Once there you will paddle around the lake in a catamaran, searching for the resident family of nine giant river otters (seen by 60% of our lake visitors) and other lakeside wildlife such as caiman, hoatzin and horned screamers. Otters are most active from dawn to eight or nine in the morning. You can also fish for Paranas!! Return to the lodge for breakfast. In the late morning, you will join a local community member into the rainforest to learn about Brazil Nut collection. Brazil nuts are the rain forests only non extractive commodity. A local Brazil nut concession manager will lead us through a stand of trees, analyzing the concession system, the role of the concession in the family economy and the future of the industry. Anecdotes and first hand accounts will complete the picture of life as a "castañeros". Return to lodge for rest and lunch. After dinner, if you want, you can take a night safari to see all the animals that come out at night. **B, L, D**

DAY FIVE: CUSCO, THE CAPITOL OF THE INCA EMPIRE

After breakfast, we will board the boat back to Puerto Maldonado and transfer to the airport for our flight to Cusco, the capital of the Inca Empire. Transfer from airport to local guesthouse. Afternoon walking tour of the imperial city of the Incas to the ancient monuments of Qorikancha, the temple of the Sun; the fine Inca walls of Calle Loreto, once again bearing its original Quechua name of Inti Q'ijllo; the Ajlla Wasi, the House of the Virgins of the Sun; the Stone of Twelve Angles; and the Huacaypata (Leisure Square), more commonly referred to by its Spanish name of the Plaza de Armas.

Peru's sensory feast comes alive as we wander through the flowers, meat, fruit and shamans' markets. In the afternoon, you will have time to explore on your own, perhaps by walking the narrow streets and finding hidden gems in the small tiendas (stores) full of local handicrafts, musical instruments and fine jewelry. The drastic change in plant life from the Amazon to the Andes is notable, and this will begin your own comparison of Andean to Amazonian medicine. Although maybe not as lush as what we found in the Amazon, the marketplace is full of plants and fruits that cure headaches, heartaches, and any other ailment you can think of. After a day of exploration, it's dinner at a favorite local eatery accompanied by the sounds of traditional folkloric music. Evening dinner and time to explore Cuzco's famous nightlife and music scene. **B**

DAY SIX: PACHAMAMA GIVING CEREMONY WITH SHAMAN AT MOON TEMPLE AND VISIT TO SAQSAYHUMAN

Today we will travel through the Sacred Valley of the Incas on horseback visiting some of the areas most impressive Inca ruins such as the Temple of the Moon and the Temple of the Sun, ending at the impressive Inca fortress of Sacsayhuman. Here we will explore this important archeological site and partake in a giving ceremony at the Moon temple with one of Peru's female shamans before returning to Cusco for lunch. After lunch we will travel 30 minutes down the Sacred Valley of the Incas to the Quechua village of Chinchero where we will meet our Quechua hosts Vilma and Paulino. Vilma Llangunaco is an accomplished Incan weaver. She and her husband Paulino established the Minka' Chinchero Co-op, which teaches local children the ancient Incan tradition of weaving and creating natural dyes. The goal of the Co-op is not just to preserve and to study

traditional textiles, but also is to assist families in creating a larger market for their textiles and a new economy for their communities. While in Chinchero, we will take a short walking tour of the old central church and visit the incredible Chinchero Inca Archeological Site. We will also visit the local artisans market where we can try Chica (fermented corn beer) and barter for goods. We will spend the evening with our Quechua hosts and experience traditional Andean food, campfires and stories. **B,D**

DAY SEVEN-EIGHT: CHINCHERO AND COMMERCIAL USE OF NATIVE PLANTS

Vilma will not only serve as our host, she will also be our guide into the remote areas of the Andes she has navigated for her entire life. As the local 'Curandera', or Shaman, she has been climbing into the hills to harvest the unique roots and leaves that are used in healing teas and serums for her family and community. On this day we will climb the hills of Chinchero, where views of the Andes are staggering and a natural pharmacy awaits. This herb trek will be precious time to connect to the history and ritual of Incan medicine. Be prepared to do your own harvesting; Vilma is likely to strap on an Alpaca shawl around your back to use as a backpack, and by the end of this adventure, you will be carrying your own ethnobotanical study down the mountains. Vilma is a patient teacher and is eager to share the healing properties of these plants, complete with sensory observation of each item. Smell, sight, texture and taste will enhance your knowledge of the Andean plants. We will spend the next two days learning about the commercial and medicinal uses of the native plants of the Andes. Informal classes will be held, teas and potions will be made, and we will go on a few more adventures high into the altitude to discover more treasures of the Andes.

In addition, we will get to know the various projects that Vilam and her husband have created in order to bring aid to this small mountain community.

B,L,D

DAY NINE-TEN: OLLANTAYTAMBO-O'ERO COMMUNITY. SPIRITUAL USES OF NATIVE PLANTS.

Activities to be announced. **B**

DAY ELEVEN: RETURN TO LIMA AND HOME

On our final day we will travel back to Cusco to catch an afternoon flight back to the capital of Lima where we will have time for a final dinner celebration before boarding our overnight flight back to the states. **B**

DAY TWELVE: ARRIVE HOME

MACHU PICCHU EXTENSION

DAY 1 HIKING THE TRAIL TO MACHU PICCHU

After breakfast, you will travel an hour down the sacred valley to the Inca town of Ollantaytambo. From here you will board a train for one hour to Km 104 where you will disembark and begin your trek of the Royal Inca Trail to Machu Picchu.

Following the footsteps of the Inca, you will hike the Royal Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. This route is believed to be the ceremonial path that the Inca ruling caste used for ritual purification before entering the sacred site of Machu Picchu. The trail is a magnificent hike from the Choquesuysuy ruins, through an amazing cloud forest to Quetzal Falls, to the watch tower of Winayhuayna ruins. In the afternoon you will climb to Intipunku (Gate of the Sun), the ancient entrance to the sanctuary and arrive in the late afternoon to see Machu Picchu for the first time. When all the crowds have cleared, we will descend to Aguas Calientes where we can enjoy an evening of soaking in the fabulous local hot springs. **B, L**

DAY 2: FULL DAY TO EXPLORE MACCHU PICCHU

We will spend the entire day exploring the ruins of Machu Picchu while hearing the stories of the meaning behind this site from our local guide. In the afternoon you will have free time to explore the ruins on your own and to climb to the top of Wayanu Picchu and the Temple of the Moon before returning to Aguas Calientes to take the train back to Cuzco. Then you will have a free evening in Cuzco. **B**

DAY 3 CUZCO-LIMA-HOME

There will be time in the morning for final exploration of Cuzco before boarding our afternoon flight back to Lima and then home. **B**