



Checking In:

The new Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba in Peru.

Latin America

carla hunt

Any time is a good time for an update on new products in Latin American countries. Why? Check out these figures: Nicaragua continues to be hailed as the "new Costa Rica"; Colombia's good notices are expanding touring beyond Cartagena and Bogota; Ecuador's tourism numbers grew by 14 percent last year; Brazil's by 10.6 percent; and Chile's by 5.3 percent. Peru, meanwhile, is earning accolades for great wilderness comforts and award-winning culinary treats.

up in the air

The **LATAM Airlines Group** (latamairlinesgroup.com) continues to expand air service, connecting the U.S. to South America, most recently from Orlando, Florida to Brazil and Peru. The group's **TAM Airlines** has inaugurated daily flights between Orlando and Brasilia; flights on this route use the modern Boeing 767-300ER aircraft.

LAN Peru, meanwhile, introduced daily nonstop flights between Orlando and Lima, operating with Airbus A319 aircraft on the first-ever service connecting these two destinations.

JetBlue (jetblue.com) plans to launch daily service between Fort Lauderdale and Quito, starting the first quarter of 2016. The carrier will use the 150-seat Airbus A320 aircraft on the route. Expanding its footprint in South America, JetBlue will compete with **TAME**, Ecuador's flag carrier, on this route.

Delta (delta.com) has filed for regulatory approval to move its Atlanta-Brasilia service to new nonstop flights between Orlando and Brasilia, beginning Dec. 1. Delta expects to serve the two cities with four weekly flights.

Copan, a Mayan city-state in Honduras, and its nearby town of Copan Ruinas, are now connected to the rest of the country by air service into the new Rio Amarillo Copan Ruinas International Airport. **CM Airlines** (cmairlines.com) is connecting San Pedro Sula, Roatan, La Ceiba and Tegucigalpa to Copan, while **TAG Airlines** (tag.com.gt) is operating charters from Guatemala.

tour operator update

In 2016, **Tauck** (tauck.com) is expanding its Earth Journeys partnership with the award-winning nature documentary filmmakers at BBC Earth to include trips exploring Costa Rica: an 8-day *Costa Rica Adventure*; an 8-day *Costa Rica Jungles & Rainforests* family trip; and an 11-day *Panama Canal & Costa Rica* land/cruise journey, including a 6-night cruise aboard the **M/V Tere Moana** that includes a transit of the Panama Canal. These journeys are included in Tauck's "2016 Exotics" collection brochure.

Insight Vacations (insightvacations.com) is headed to South America in 2016 with the addition of its new *Luxury Gold* itinerary, the 12-day *Treasures of the Incas*. The tour begins in Lima then heads off to the Sacred Valley, where participants meet with locals during immersive experiences. Machu Picchu is, of course, on the books, as is Cusco. After that, they board the *Andean Explorer* and traverse the mountains and highlands to arrive at Lake Titicaca. Accommodations are top-notch and include **Tambo del Inka, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, El Convento** in Cusco, and **Libertador Lake Titicaca**.

Tara Tours (taratours.com), meanwhile, debuted its 8-day *Costa Rica on a Budget* tour earlier this year that visits San Jose, Arenal and the Guanacaste area, with accommodations one night at **Volcano Lodge**, with great views of the volcano.

new hotels

Brand new to Buenos Aires is the boutique **Tango de Mayo Hotel** (tango-hotel.com.ar), located down the street from Argentina's executive mansion, Casa Rosada, and within walking distance of the Colon Theater. Built in 1913 and restored to its original Art Deco splendor, Tango de Mayo has 59 themed rooms, including one 590-sq.-ft. *Tango Suite*, with its own jacuzzi. Guest amenities include complimentary breakfast and WiFi, and the Zoral Restaurant serving Mediterranean-Inspired Argentine cuisine.

Also in Buenos Aires, the 50-guestroom **Anselmo Buenos Aires** is now part of the **Curio Collection by Hilton** portfolio (curiocollection3.hilton.com). The property, which was converted from a portion of a historic mansion in 1906, is situated in the heart of San Telmo and offers upscale restaurant and bar concepts.

In Peru, everyone's talking about the new **Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba** (inkaterra.com), now open in the Sacred Valley of

the Incas between Cusco and Machu Picchu. Set on a 100-acre property, the hacienda has 12 guestrooms, including a 3-room Owners Suite; all rooms have views of the valley and surrounding mountains. Opened this summer are 24 stand-alone luxury casitas. On-property is a 10-acre organic plantation where guests are welcome to pick their own produce. Guests have access to a variety of activities and excursions, from birdwatching to horseback riding.

In Uruguay, the luxury, 44-room **Carmelo Resort & Spa** (carmelo.hyatt.com), nestled on the banks of the Rio de la Plata in Carmelo, has joined the **Hyatt** portfolio. The resort incorporates Asian and South American design touches, including the use of imported woods, all the while maintaining authentic Uruguayan hospitality. The resort offers exquisitely appointed 24 bi-level suites and 20 detached villas, and all accommodations offer a private terrace for outdoor living and private dining, as well as stunning views of the surrounding area that includes a eucalyptus forest, pine groves, vineyards, and the famed Rio de la Plata.

The hotel boom in Rio de Janeiro, which began before the *World Cup* soccer games in 2014, continues full speed ahead as the 2016 *Summer Olympics* is just a year away. Most of the Olympic venues are in the Barra da Tijuca district—famous for its long white beaches—and so are a host of new hotels.

The **Hilton Barra Rio de Janeiro** (hilton.com), which opened in April and is the brand's first hotel in Rio, is located five minutes away from the Olympic Park—guaranteed to be popular during the 2016 *Summer Olympics*—and 15 minutes to the best beaches in Barra. The 9-story hotel has 288 guestrooms, including executive floor rooms and suites, while the rooftop is home to Champagne House, welcoming guests to enjoy beverages by the pool.

Coming to Barra da Tijuca is **Grand Hyatt Rio de Janeiro** (hyatt.com), due to open later this year. Located beachfront, the hotel will have 426 guestrooms (including 42 suites), all with balconies. Facilities include three restaurants and a spa, and on the list of guest services are beach butlers.

In Costa Rica, **AMResorts** (amresorts.com) is converting the Hilton Papagayo Costa Rica Resort & Spa in the Guanacaste Peninsula to an adults-only, 202-suite **Secrets Papagayo Resort & Spa** (opening Nov. 11). AMResorts' first property in Costa Rica, **Dreams Las Mareas**, opened in the same area late last year.

In Costa Rica's Arenal region, the award-winning **Nayara Springs** (nayaraspings.com) is putting finishing touches on 24 new ultra luxury villas, tucked privately into the rainforest, each with a private pool, as well as a new yoga pavilion and restaurant. January is the opening month.

The newest member of the **Green Pearls** group, the **Macaw Lodge** (macawlodge.com), is a model of sustainable development through ecotourism, for at the heart of the project is conservation of the scarlet macaw and the prevention of further loss of forests. Occupying the Macaw Lodge Private Forest Reserve in Costa Rica's Central Pacific region and surrounded by natural forests and botanical gardens, the 2-story lodge has a restaurant and a lounge, as well as eight guestrooms. Additionally, four cabins with kitchens and a deck with rocking chairs accommodate two or four guests. Activities range from bird walks and rural community visits to horseback riding and sea kayaking. Also in Costa Rica, **Auberge Resorts Collection** is now managing **Hacienda AltaGracia**, a brand-new luxury resort located in the lush mountains of Perez Zeledon in the country's southern region. Originally conceived and developed as a family retreat and coffee farm, this **Leading Hotels**

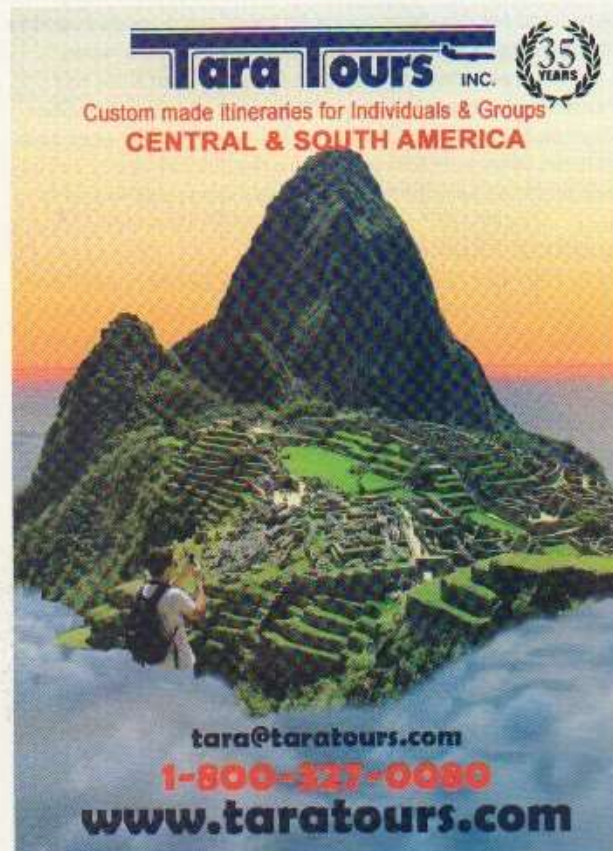
of the World resort has been rebranded as Hacienda AltaGracia, an Auberge Resort (altagracia.cr); this marks the brand's first foray into Central America. The property offers 50 hacienda-style casitas featuring lush patios and terraces with views of the San Isidro Valley and nearby mountains; rustic-elegant decor rooted in rich leathers, woods and handcrafted Costa Rican artwork; and luxury amenities including fireplaces, bathtubs and a butler's pantry.

expedition cruising

For next year, **Un-Cruise Adventures** (un-cruise.com) has two new cruises in Latin America: the week-long *Sloths, Monkeys & Mangroves* itinerary that sails on the 64-guest **Safari Voyager** between San Jose, Costa Rica and Panama City, and includes jungle hikes, watersports, and a full Panama Canal transit; and the 10-day *Unequaled Ecuador*, which includes a 2-day tour of Quito and a week-long cruise in the Galapagos Islands aboard the 48-guest **La Pinta**.

Cruising from Iquitos, Peru on 8-night explorations of the Peruvian Amazon, the 44-passenger **Amazon Discovery** will debut in October. This newest member of **Haimark's** (haimarktravel.com) luxury fleet of river cruisers is fitted with 22 staterooms, ranging from 237 to 597 sq. ft. There's also an open-deck with small pool, the Andes dining room and the *Rainforest Spa*.

Metropolitan Touring (metropolitan-touring.com) is retiring the 90-passenger *Santa Cruz*, and introducing her modern luxury successor, the 90-passenger **Santa Cruz II**, due to set sail in the Galapagos Islands Oct. 1. The new vessel will feature modern and spacious common areas, 36 connecting cabins (50 cabins in all and all with large windows), dining areas indoors and out, an elegant bar and lounge, a well-stocked library, and kayaks. *Santa Cruz II* will sail on 4-, 5- and 9-night itineraries. ●



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