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Spring Collections 2016

GUCCI'S
NEW DESIGNER
Inside His Creative Process

*The
BG Guide
to Peru*

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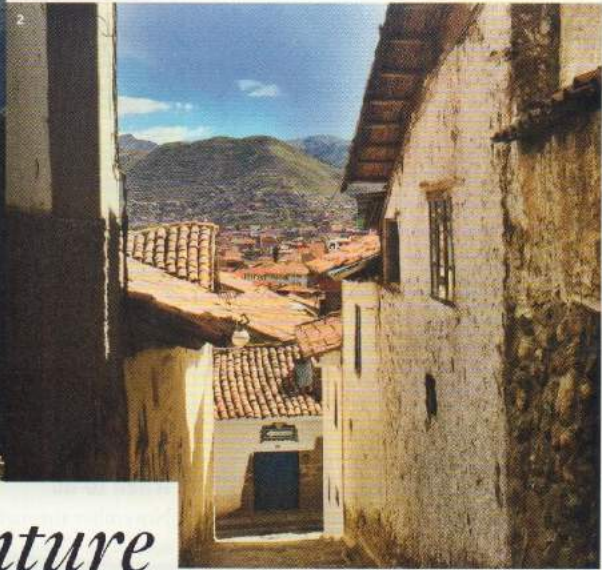
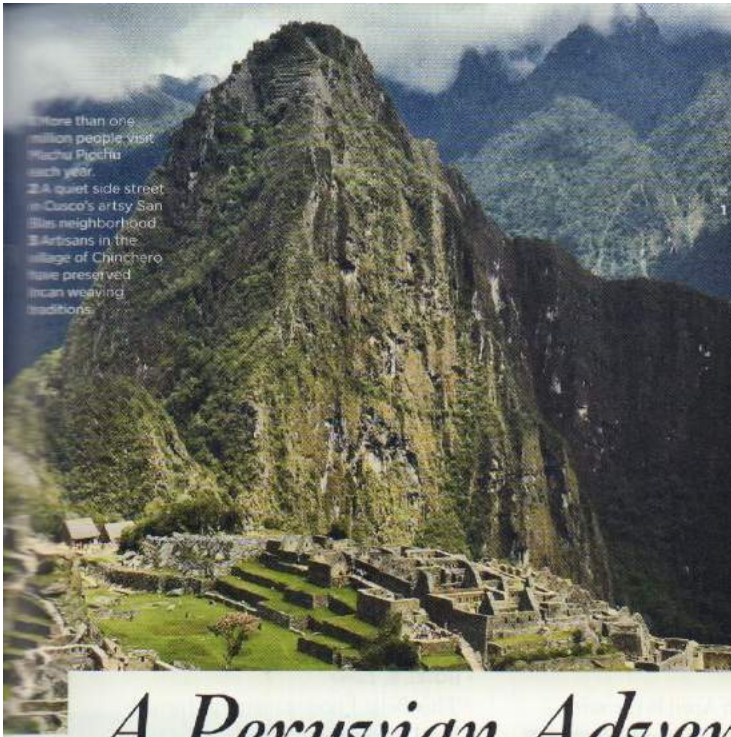


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EXUBERANT ECLECTICISM • BOLD STATEMENT PIECES • THE SEASON'S KEY TRENDS

More than one million people visit Machu Picchu each year.
2 A quiet side street in Cusco's artsy San Blas neighborhood.
3 Artisans in the village of Chinchero have preserved Incan weaving traditions.



A Peruvian Adventure

Exploring the Inca Trail and the ancient cities of the Sacred Valley, *Jen Murphy* finds that modern luxuries bring the opportunity for new discoveries.

Growing up, I wanted to be an explorer. But on a college trip to San Salvador Island, a week of unrelenting bugs and instant coffee made me realize I'm what real adventurers call a "martini explorer," a person who fancies herself as tough but prefers a certain level of luxury.

When I had the opportunity to travel to Machu Picchu, I toyed with the idea of following in the footsteps of Hiram Bingham, the American adventurer who famously rediscovered the lost city of the Incas in 1911. How thrilling would it be to trek the legendary Inca Trail? I envisioned four days of high-altitude passes and stunning views—but also blisters, bucket showers and mosquitoes. I immediately bought a round-trip ticket for the luxury train that is named after the explorer and makes the trip in three and a half hours. Surely Bingham would have done the same, given the option.

Adventure, I have learned, is a state of mind. So, I set off on my Peruvian



journey with the goal of discovery. Bingham started his expedition on foot from Cusco. The former capital of the Inca Empire sits at an altitude sickness-inducing 11,152 feet. Cusco has maintained its Spanish colonial charm, while adapting to the demands of modern tourists. Luxury brands such as Inkaterra, JW Marriott and Belmond have converted convents and colonial manor houses into hotels complete with spas and fine restaurants. And Lima's world-famous gastronomy scene is slowly spreading through the city. Peru's celebrity chef Gastón Acurio has led the way,

opening Chicha and Papacho's, while other top Lima chefs, such as Virgilio Martínez, are rumored to be opening establishments in the next year or so.

Rather than test the theory that drinking copious amounts of coca tea prevents high-altitude headaches, I acclimate at the new Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba. Nestled in Peru's Sacred Valley between Cusco and Machu Picchu, the hotel sits at 9,420 feet and provides the ideal place to get accustomed to Andean culture. My suite is fit for an Incan princess, with a fireplace, heated floors and framed vintage textiles on the walls.

Bingham's famous discoveries largely hinged on his willingness to seek the advice of locals. Looking to tap into the secrets of the Sacred Valley, I befriend my guide, José, in braces and glasses, leads me up the Challa Huasi Trail, a twenty-minute hike on the Inkaterra property. José is an obsessive birder, and his excitement far exceeds mine, as we spot a giant hummingbird. At the summit, we gaze out over the valley's green peaks, and I eye José and explain I want to see more. "At 6 a.m. we offer birding," he says. I point to the mountains beyond the property, and he seems to understand. I want an adventure.

BG on Location

The next morning, José and I drive twenty minutes to Chinchero, an Andean village acclaimed for its textiles. At a women's cooperative, I watch a girl, using a shard of glass, cut wool from the hide of an alpaca, before it soaks in a pot of boiling water with natural dyes. The girl plucks tiny bugs called cochineal from a rotting cactus leaf and drops a few in my palm, crushing them to get a dark red hue. "Natural lipstick, lasts 100 kisses," the girl says as she smears the bugs on our lips. With my bright red lips, I'm probably the most dolled-up visitor these villagers have seen.

José has agreed to take me on a three-hour trek from Chinchero to Urquillos along an Incan trail. I had assumed there was only one, but he informs me there are 26,000 miles of trails that connected the vast corners of the empire. I can tell he is taking it easy on me, as our path is all downhill. Incan ruins tower above us, and fields of potatoes and corn stretch out below. A sun-beaten *campesino* (farmer) and his mule are our only company. I soak in the silence and enjoy being off the beaten path.

Later, I worry that my tourist-free trek will make crowded Machu Picchu feel like a letdown. But when I reach the ancient citadel, its awe sweeps over me, despite the selfie-sticks. Unlike the Andean Highlands, Machu Picchu sits in a cloud forest at 7,800 feet, eternally green and shrouded in mist. Built in the fifteenth century, the sacred site was abandoned when the Spaniards conquered the Incas in the sixteenth century. This 80,000-acre city was just hiding in the jungle, until Bingham stumbled upon it with the help of a local farmer.

BG DISPATCHES The BG team traveled to Peru to shoot the stories that begin on pages 76 and 122. Go behind the scenes of the shoot and see the highlights of the trip in a video on **5th58th** BG.COM/DISPATCH



1 The JW Marriott El Convento, Cusco. 2 The tasting menu at Lima's acclaimed Central Restaurante.



The BG Guide to Peru

When to Go

November through April is the rainy season in Cusco, the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu. The dry season is May through September.

How to Get There

- **LAN AIRLINES** offers direct flights from New York (and four other cities) to Lima and about twenty flights per day from Lima to Cusco. (lan.com)
- **HIRAM BINGHAM** Make the three-and-a-half-hour journey from Cusco to Machu Picchu by luxury train. (perurail.com)

Where to Stay

- **INKATERRA HACIENDA URUBAMBA, Sacred Valley** Handwoven blankets and fireplaces give the twelve suites and twenty-four casitas a rustic-elegant vibe. Activities such as bird-watching and a class in making *chicha de jora* (corn beer) are included. (inkaterra.com)
- **INKATERRA MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO HOTEL** Nestled in the cloud forest below the Incan citadel, this twelve-acre oasis feels like an Andean village. (inkaterra.com)
- **JW MARRIOTT EL CONVENTO CUSCO** Located on the site of the sixteenth-century San Agustín Convent, the JW Marriott still features original pre-Incan walls in some of its 153 guest rooms. The hotel can arrange private tours of Mercado San Pedro with the chef. (jwmarriottcusco.com)

HOTEL B, Lima

This Belle Époque mansion-turned-hotel feels like a museum, with Latin art displayed throughout the suites and common areas. (hotelb.pe)

Where to Eat

- **CHICHA, Cusco** Try alpaca-topped pizza at superstar chef Gastón Acurio's restaurant overlooking Plaza Regocijo. (chicha.com.pe)
- **CENTRAL RESTAURANTE, Lima** Plan at least three months in advance to experience star chef Virgilio Martínez's seventeen-course tasting menu. (centralrestaurante.com.pe)
- **ISOLINA, Lima** Taste criollo foods typically found in the kitchens of Peruvian grandmothers. (isolina.pe)

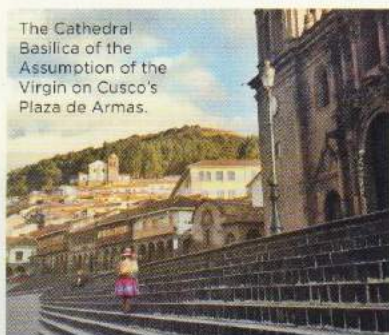
What to Do

- **CENTRO TEXTIL URPI, Sacred Valley** Learn more about Chinchero's weaving tradition at this local cooperative. (*Av. Garcilaso No. 160, Chinchero*)
- **PRE-COLUMBIAN ART MUSEUM, Cusco** This former Incan ceremonial court now showcases ancient objects. (map.museolarco.org)
- **COCOLISO, Cusco** Pick up handmade knits made from baby alpaca. (*Calle Palacio, +51 84 242 159*)
- **MATE, Lima** Photographer Mario Testino's gallery houses his work alongside that of other international talents. (mate.pe)

BG on Location

William, my own guide, thinks I'm crazy when I ask if we should walk the steep, windy road from Aguas Calientes, Machu Picchu's main town, up to the citadel, just as Bingham did in 1911. "Why, when the bus is three times as fast?" he asks. Heeding my request for adventure, William leads me along the stone terraces and points across the valley to a towering mountain. "We're going to the top," he says. The peak, Huayna Picchu, looks improbable to climb, but the Incas cut

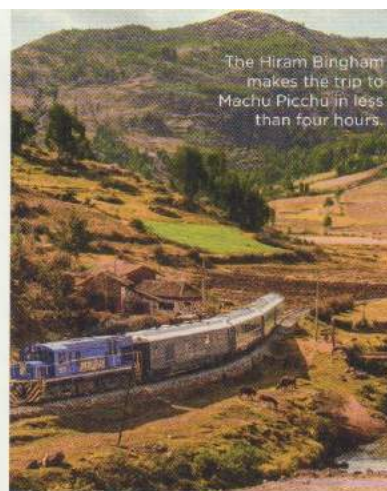
The Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin on Cusco's Plaza de Armas.



steps into the stone. We scramble up rocks and ropes and after two hours reach the summit, where a bird's-eye view of the Incan site greets us. By now, the bugs have gotten to me. I'm itchy and gasping for breath, but I feel a wonderful high from my accomplishment.

After Bingham reached Machu Picchu, he still had to trek back to civilization to share his tales. I simply board the Hiram Bingham train and relax in a 1920s Pullman carriage for the journey back to Cusco, and then Lima, where I will gallery hop around the hip Barranco neighborhood, so I can work up an appetite to sample the hot local food scene. I plan to try the grandmotherly cooking at Isolina and experience the seventeen-course tasting menu at Latin America's top restaurant, Central.

My train ride includes a four-course, white-tablecloth meal, which makes me worry I'm in for a stuffy tourist-filled ride. But I am the only American, surrounded by Peruvians. Before dinner,



The Hiram Bingham makes the trip to Machu Picchu in less than four hours.

we gather in the bar car, and the band strikes up a raucous rendition of "Guan-tanamera." To my horror, the singer hands me the tambourine and insists I dance. I take a big gulp of pisco sour and try to find the rhythm as the train car sways. Everyone is on their feet dancing, drinks in hand, and by the time we sit for dinner, I'm admittedly tipsy. Just as I start to doze off, the train jolts to a stop. "Landslide ahead," announces the conductor. We'll disembark and continue by van. Even martini travel comes with unexpected adventures, but as Bingham proved, the best are never planned. **86**

WHAT TO PACK

Brightly colored pieces add to the sense of adventure.



The Beach People
\$110



RéVire
\$115

Les Petits
Joueurs
\$1,215



Eugenia Kim
\$375

Vita Kim
\$1,775



Talita
\$1,320



Aquazzura
\$850



Ranjana Khan
\$295



MSGM
\$605



Antonello
\$495