

Find the bear necessities

Ahead of the cinema release of Paddington 2 tomorrow, Sarah Marshall recommends the best places to see the spectacled bears that inspired Michael Bond's classic character

CARRYING a suitcase stuffed with marmalade sandwiches, Paddington Bear is one of the Britain's most endearing children's storybook characters.

But Michael Bond's duffel-coated creature - who celebrates his 60th anniversary in 2018 - actually originated in deepest, darkest Peru.

Seeking an interesting homeland for his lost protagonist, Bond settled on the South American destination as it sounded exotic.

But Peru does in fact have its own collection of charming bears, and a new limited edition one-sol coin has even been engraved with an image of the spectacled Andean species.

If you want to see one in the flesh, try these 3 options...

1. Learn the bear necessities with Inkaterra

Conservation-minded hotel group Inkaterra has a sanctuary on site at their Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel. A new three-night package allows guests to shadow an Inkaterra Explorer Guide and Bear Keeper as they take care of the animals. From £1,020, all meals included, along with a tour of the famous citadel. Flights extra. Visit

inkaterra.com

2. Help them seek sanctuary in Chiclayo

There's a second rehabilitation centre in Chiclayo on the northern coast of Peru, which is incorporated as part of a trip with Rainbow Tours. Along with a stay at Chaparri Lodge, guests can visit the Scared Valley, Cusco and Machu Picchu, where they'll also stop by at Inkaterra's rescue centre. The 12-night Darkest Peru: In Search of Paddington itinerary starts from £3,399 per person, including flights. Visit rainbowtours.co.uk

3. Go wild with bears and birds via the Colca Canyon

Seeing spectacled bears in the wild is tough, but Naturetrek give it a go on their 13-day Spectacled Bears & Andean Condors tour. Starting in the tropical dry forests of the north-west looking for Paddington's cousins, the trip continues south to the Colca Canyon and Islas Palomino, where birds are abundant.

From £3,995 per person. Visit naturetrek.co.uk. For info, visit peru.travel



● A spectacled bear