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## The Borgida's Family Adventure in Peru!

05/24/2019

### A Family Adventure and 'Trip of a Lifetime' in Peru



Sometimes it seems like planning a family outing just to go down the street can be a struggle. Thinking about a family trip to Latin America, one with the whole gang in tow, can feel daunting. But it's certainly not impossible. In fact, it doesn't have to be stressful for you at all if you travel with us!

To prove it, our own Jonathan Borgida decided to head on down to Peru with his wife, Sarah, and their two kids, Naomi and Jonas, for an epic family adventure and reports back here!

**Peru** was the just right balance of adventure, culture, and activities each day for our family. There was something for both adults and kids. The weather was perfect and great accommodations for families.

I've had the opportunity to visit Peru many times in the past two decades. In fact, at this point in my career with Southern Explorations I've been there quite a few times visiting many different parts of the country. On each of my Peru journeys, I've learned and experienced new things and have returned home excited and inspired. My family has heard me talk extensively about my Peru travels. In the past few

years, after I'd returned home and talked at length about the people I met, the places I'd visited, and the foods I'd eaten, my wife or one of my kids would say "we love hearing your stories...but when can we visit Peru and experience it ourselves?"

After a family trip to [Costa Rica](#) last year, I knew it was time for us to experience the country as a family, and last month we did just that – my family traveled to and through Peru and I must say, the journey we made was incredible. We made memories that will last forever. My wife used a phrase to describe our adventure that many Southern Explorations travelers say about our trips – it was a "trip of a lifetime." My family, like me before them, fell in love with the people, the places, the food, and the unique culture and history that makes Peru a "[bucket list](#)" destination for so many. So where did we go and what did we do?

## Family Adventures in Peru

Our Peru travel started well before dawn on April 4. My wife Sarah, children Jonas, (10) and Naomi (8) and I left our home in Seattle with 15 (15! Not a typo!) bags in tow. Yes, we brought clothes for both the Andes and the Amazon but no, our personal gear did not fill up all of those suitcases and duffle bags. Rather, we brought (literally) everything but the kitchen sink for our trips on the Inca Trail. I'm talking tents, toilets, cots, water bottles, first aid kits, etc. It was a logistical feat to get the bags/supplies to the airport (thanks Uber!), but once the bags arrived in Lima, we transferred them to the Southern Explorations staff and significantly lightened our load. Those tents, toilets, and water bottles are being used by Southern Explorations travelers hiking on the [Inca Trail](#) right now.

After spending the night in Lima and offloading 11 of the 15 bags, we headed to Cusco. We gained close to 9,000 feet in elevation. It felt like the air was thinner and the sun was stronger – because it was. When we arrived we were met by some longtime friends and two new connections - guide Darwin and driver Coco. Darwin and Coco took us to the Sacred Valley, stopping on the way at a gorgeous, colorful local market, a restaurant with guinea pig on the menu (yes, we tried it – but later in the trip), and a quinoa farm. My family was tired, happy, and ready for more! We'd planned to take it easy the following day but Darwin offered up an alternate plan – hiking to Inca ruins and visiting the town of Ollantaytambo. How could we say no?

The next day, Darwin and Coco picked us up and we headed for the hills. We climbed up, up, up into the mountains on windy, narrow roads and stopped at what appeared to be a farm on a steep hillside. This was, apparently, the trailhead. We hopped out and started climbing. Just as my daughter was preparing to deliver her first complaint of the day (likely something to the effect of "I'm tired" or "my legs hurt"), we spotted some amazing structures. Inca ruins! And they were inhabited – by llamas! My kids could have left for home at that moment and the trip would have been worth it. But the fun was just beginning.

We spent time taking selfies with the llamas and learning about Inca architecture from Darwin, watching farmers carry massive loads of potatoes on their backs, petting dogs we met on the trail, and then headed to town for lunch. What better food to eat after visiting with llamas than an animal that looks very similar – an alpaca! Not sure if we were embracing the culture or were demonstrating that we were heartless humans, but we ate alpaca burgers and loved them. After lunch, we headed back to [Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba](#).

There, we visited a traditional home where we learned how to make chichi (traditional Peruvian drink made from corn) and sampled a few varieties. We headed back to our room for a bit, then went on a guided night walk where we carried lanterns to light our way. On the walk we did some star gazing and learned about how the Incas used the stars as navigation tools. Afterwards, we ate dinner, played a few board games by the fire and then headed to bed. We felt like we'd done so much already – but we were just getting started!

The next morning, Coco and Darwin picked us up and we visited an incredible salt mine called Moray, more Inca ruins ("how did they MAKE these structures?!", we all wondered), and then headed to the countryside for what we thought was a picnic lunch. Little did we know it, but we were in for a treat! After traveling on a small road through the countryside, passing families harvesting potatoes and loading them into trucks (one of which blocked the road for a time), we arrived at the picnic site to find that our local operators had prepared a traditional Peruvian pachamanka for us! We were completely shocked and absolutely, positively delighted. A chef, who only spoke quechua (the language spoken by the Indigenous people of Peru) prepared a feast for us, and cooked our meal by digging a hole, lighting a fire, and burying everything from potatoes to fish to chicken to bananas in the fire pit. Prior to burying the food, the chef led us through a traditional spiritual ceremony. It was

powerful. Jonas and Naomi hadn't participated in anything like this before, and I wondered how they'd react. They participated without hesitation. I was proud and pleased. The food was perfectly prepared – underground – in about 15 minutes. Lunch was superb; somehow we had smoothies for dessert – the kids reported they were the best they'd ever had.

## Hiking to Machu Picchu

After lunch, we headed back to the hotel to pack – we were headed to Machu Picchu the next morning and needed to be up at 5:00 a.m. so that Coco and Darwin could pick us up at 6:00 a.m. sharp. Darwin had told us that if we wanted to catch the train and [hike to Machu Picchu](#), it was critical that we left no later than 6:00 a.m.; otherwise we'd miss our train and wouldn't have enough time to hike to Machu Picchu.

My wife, who is a master packer (note that she didn't pack the 15 bags we brought to Peru by herself, but she certainly could have...also note that she's going to read this blog if she hasn't already and this type of information makes her happy, so I'm including it) consolidated our clothes so we'd have what we needed – but nothing more – for our journey to Machu Picchu, which we would take by train, foot, and bus. We headed to bed.

The next morning, I woke up to the sound of my wife – not gently nudging me or encouraging me to open my eyes, but by yelling “OH MY GOD MY ALARM DIDN'T GO OFF AND IT'S 5:38!” My children woke up too (obviously) and we got dressed, finished packing, and headed to the restaurant for breakfast – all in 10 minutes. Let me tell you it usually takes us an hour to get ready for school/work on any given day, and we're almost late for school at least 50% of the time. I couldn't believe we were capable of getting ready that fast and later in the day, wondered how I could recreate that sense of urgency and hustle at home. (I'm home now and it hasn't worked. Ever.).

After eating breakfast in under two minutes, we saw Darwin and Coco, piled in the van and headed to the train station. About halfway there, Naomi realized she'd forgotten her beloved stuffed animal, Oscar. She was devastated and my wife did her best to comfort her. Darwin was not discouraged and assured us he would reunite Naomi and Oscar. She seemed to believe him – sort of – but had no other choice (remember, we couldn't turn back because we had a train to catch).

We got to the train, found our seats, and departed. We headed deeper into the Sacred Valley and about an hour later, the conductor announced that hikers joining the [Inca Trail at Kilometer 104](#) should disembark. That was our cue! We got off the train and began the ten mile trek to Machu Picchu with Darwin.

The next few (actually many) hours were exhilarating, challenging, and full of awe-inspiring beauty and Inca accomplishments. The trail, fully constructed out of rocks by the Incas, was intact and fully functional. (Again, how did they MAKE these structures?! They didn't have power, large machines, or any modern construction tools!) We walked through ruins hiked up some of the steepest steps I've climbed, arriving at the Sun Gate in the late afternoon. Machu Picchu was in view! My daughter laid face down on a big rock – excited, proud, and tired. About an hour later, we walked into Machu Picchu. We were in awe. I've been there several times but there was something really special about being there with my family. We spent some time exploring, then headed to the town of Aguas Calientes for the night. At our amazing hotel, the [Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo](#), we ran into some fellow hikers, who complimented my kids for their strength and stamina.

The next day, we went back to Machu Picchu and Darwin gave us an incredible guided tour, including taking us on a short, yet stunning hike where we saw some Inca bridges (not accessible anymore – they're narrow and have no hand rails – the drop is about 2,000 feet!). In the afternoon, we headed back to Aguas Calientes, ate a delicious local lunch, and rested our tired feet.

The next day, we headed back to Ollantaytambo. Guess who was waiting for us there? Oscar! Darwin is a man of his word – he'd located Oscar at the hotel and coordinated an Oscar reunion. It was incredible! Naomi was thrilled.

We visited more of the Sacred Valley, stopped by a traditional weaving community (where everyone in my family found things to buy), then checked into the J.W. Marriott in Cusco. That evening, we visited an incredible friend and Southern Explorations staffer, Angie Muro. We met her beautiful baby Luana. What a treat. Afterwards, my wife the master packer (remember, she's going to read this) packed



our bags for the next part of our journey, the Amazon, where we were heading the next day. As was the case with our trip to Machu Picchu, we need to pack what we needed – and nothing more – for our journey to the **Amazon**, which we would take by plane, van, and boat.

## Journey to the Amazon

The next morning we traveled to the airport, boarded our plane, and within an hour's time landed in the hot, humid rainforest. We were greeted by the lodge staff and transported to a boat that we boarded and took an hour's ride to Reserva Amazonica. When we arrived, we ate lunch and toured the grounds. At **Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica**, we took a night boat ride and saw the capybara (world's largest rodent) and other crazy cool animals. The kids were impressed. The next morning, we hiked to Lake Sandoval, then headed to the lodge by motorized canoe.

After we arrived, we toured the grounds and ate lunch. Sarah and Jonas took a night hike – they reported seeing LOTS of big spiders, including a tarantula, a giant snail, a sloth, and a few other wild and wacky creatures. The next day, we headed out for a day-long excursion of piranha fishing, swimming, and eating. My kids had never gone fishing before, and I'm not sure their next experience will come close to this one! Our fishing spot was full of piranhas (that might be an understatement). We were able to catch about 25 fish with a sick, some string, and some bait. That's it! In fact, a fish jumped into the boat – meaning we caught fish with no pole, no line, no bait. It was incredible. Afterwards, we jumped into that very same lake (apparently piranhas don't bite unless you have open wounds) and cooled off in the water. We had lunch and then headed back to the lodge and prepared to depart.

## Lima City Tour

The next morning we gathered our things and said goodbye. It was time to leave the Amazon and head by boat, van, and plane to the lively, incredibly large, and culturally rich city of Lima for a **short (6 hour) city tour**.

We were met in Lima and visited the colonial part of the city. It happened to be Palm Sunday; the churches were packed and the streets and squares were overflowing with people carrying palms. We visited some local shops, ate dinner on a patio overlooking John F. Kennedy park, and headed to the airport. It was time to head home.

Our flight left in the middle of the night. We'd done so much – every day was action-packed and full of fun and adventure - we were tired, grateful, and perhaps not quite ready to head home. However, after 11 days of Peru travel, it was time. At 12:30 a.m., our plane took off – bound for the United States. It was, indeed, a “trip of a lifetime”.

To see the Borgida Family's full adventure, **check out our Facebook page** for their photo album from Peru!

To start planning your own family adventure trip to **Peru**, give us a call today! **877-784-5400**

Trip	Price	Days	Highlights
<b>Alternative Inca Trail</b>	\$3,435	11 Days	Cusco, Ancient Inca Trail , Machu Picchu, Local Perspective , Off the beaten Trek
<b>Amazon &amp; Machu Picchu</b>	\$2,935	9 Days	Amazon Rainforest & Jungle, Amazon Wildlife, Sacred Valley of the Incas, Machu Picchu
<b>Classic Inca Trail</b>	\$2,995	10 Days	Lima, Cusco , Inca Trail Trek, Machu Picchu, Sacred Valley
<b>Experience Machu Picchu</b>	\$2,415	7 days	Lima, Sacred Valley, Cusco, Machu Picchu



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## GOOD KHARMA

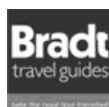
"This was one of the best organized trips I have ever taken. Using SE and being completely "taken care of" from start to finish was awesome! Guides were fantastic during our adventures in Peru. We cannot thank you enough for the wonderful experience of seeing and learning about Peru!"

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Peru

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