J&M4-14

Up early again. Peruvians like to get out and about early… Certainly the way to make your day work for you but it plays hell with your sleep pattern.

Early breakfast, usual fare, masses of food cocoa tea (no thanks). Tend to take our own tea (red bush) and ginger.

This was the Hobbit house, we arrived here after dark because of the diversion to the hot springs. Didn't use them personally but a few of the others did. To get to the springs required a twenty minute walk from the lunchtime stop down a long and winding track and included an involvement with a small snake followed by long and very bumpy ride of about 90 minutes and similar back.

Arriving at the camp at about six in near total dark. Of itself, this shouldn't have been a problem but the access to the camp is through essentially a hundred feet of 45° jungle, no path, climbing over rocks and roots, one head torch between us was probably one of the most dangerous things we'd done.
The camp was delightful, the Hobbit houses themselves were lovely and warm too. Glazed brick built with round windows and door, really creaky in our case. The site layout was…. Difficult. The houses themselves were at a high level, the dining hall down stone steps and to get to the toilet block from the dining room you had to climb back up to the houses, along a path, cross another then down more steps to the loo block. We didn't really have time to appreciate the place, we arrived in the dark and it was semi dark when we left, re climbing the hideously steep jungle path to the road, this time carrying both day pack and duffle.

We loaded the van and we're driven for about twenty minutes to the start of what we discovered later and entry way to the ***Inca Trail*** and yes, off we went up the Inca Trail.

A short while later we came to what we thought was another pitstop but turned out to be a coffee plantation. Run by an elderly lady 63 who certainly knew how.

We had an exhibition in which we were literally involved in the whole process from the coffee berry, soft and slightly sweet, to the beans themselves, two per berry. These are shelled again to remove the outer cover then allowed to dry for 24-48 hours. These then are the green coffee beans. We then roasted some of these green beans in an earthenware pot over a hot fire, stirring constantly for about ten minutes when the suddenly turn dark brown.

From there , they are placed in a hand turned fairly rudimentary but quite clever grinder, the resulting powder put into an infuser and drunk espresso style. Powerful stuff but add a little local honey and it's plain wonderful.

We climbed 700 meters over 6kM about two and a half hours to the top of the trail. Really hard climbing. The plateau at the top rewarded with a view of Machuppichu, the city of the Inca's. We were across the valley and slightly above that place. We could also see the outpourings of the hydroelectric dam.

Our route down from there took us across a long and swinging rope bride and by where the aforementioned dam flow hit the ground and returned to river..

Trudging on we reached the station of Aguas Calientes, boarded a train that brought us to Machuppichu and a hotel….

With real beds and running ***hot*** water. Wow!! What a pleasure….

Had a final evening meal with our wonderful group and brilliant guides down in the town. And slept like babes.

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