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Exploring Aguas Calientes: The Entry Point To Machu Picchu, Peru

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Arriving at [Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel](#) was akin to arriving at an oasis in the desert! For starters, the altitude in Aguas Calientes is a lot lower than Cusco so even at high altitude, it was just that extra bit easier to walk around (and even sprint) without running out of breath!



Then there's the whole fact that you're in one of the nicest hotels in the area. Set within a cloud forest – Inkaterra Machu Picchu is without a doubt one of the best places to stay in Machu Picchu.



If you remember, in the last post I said two things;

1.) You probably can't and shouldn't plan a trip to Machu Picchu (ruins) on the same day you arrive at the village. You're best leaving it until the next day and spending at least one night here.

2.) There's not much to do in the village (asides for a few restaurants and bars) so the choice of hotels here is very important.



Inkaterra Machu Picchu comes with all the good distractions you'd expect (pool, spa...etc) but even better still, due to their historic location there's a lot more to do here than in your average hotel. But I'll tell you more about that in a bit – let me show you around the hotel first! 😊







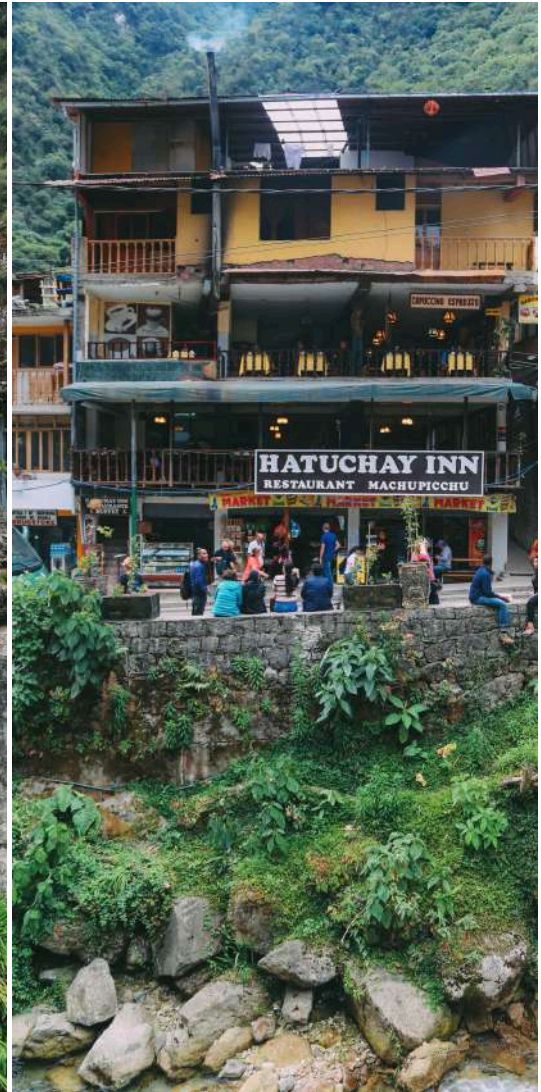


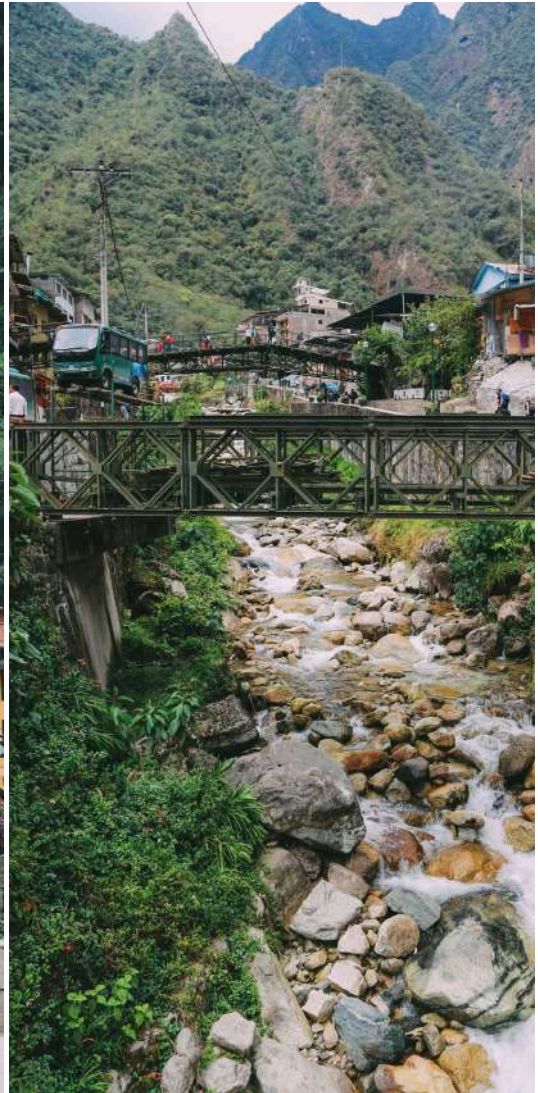
Once we checked in, we went to buy our tickets for the bus to Machu Picchu in the morning (you didn't really think I'd be doing a 4 am 2-hour hike now did you? 😊).

Thing is, we were told that we would need to show up at least 2 hours before our 6 am bus ride to Machu Picchu (spoiler alert – they were not kidding – that queue was round the block even when we arrived at 4 am).



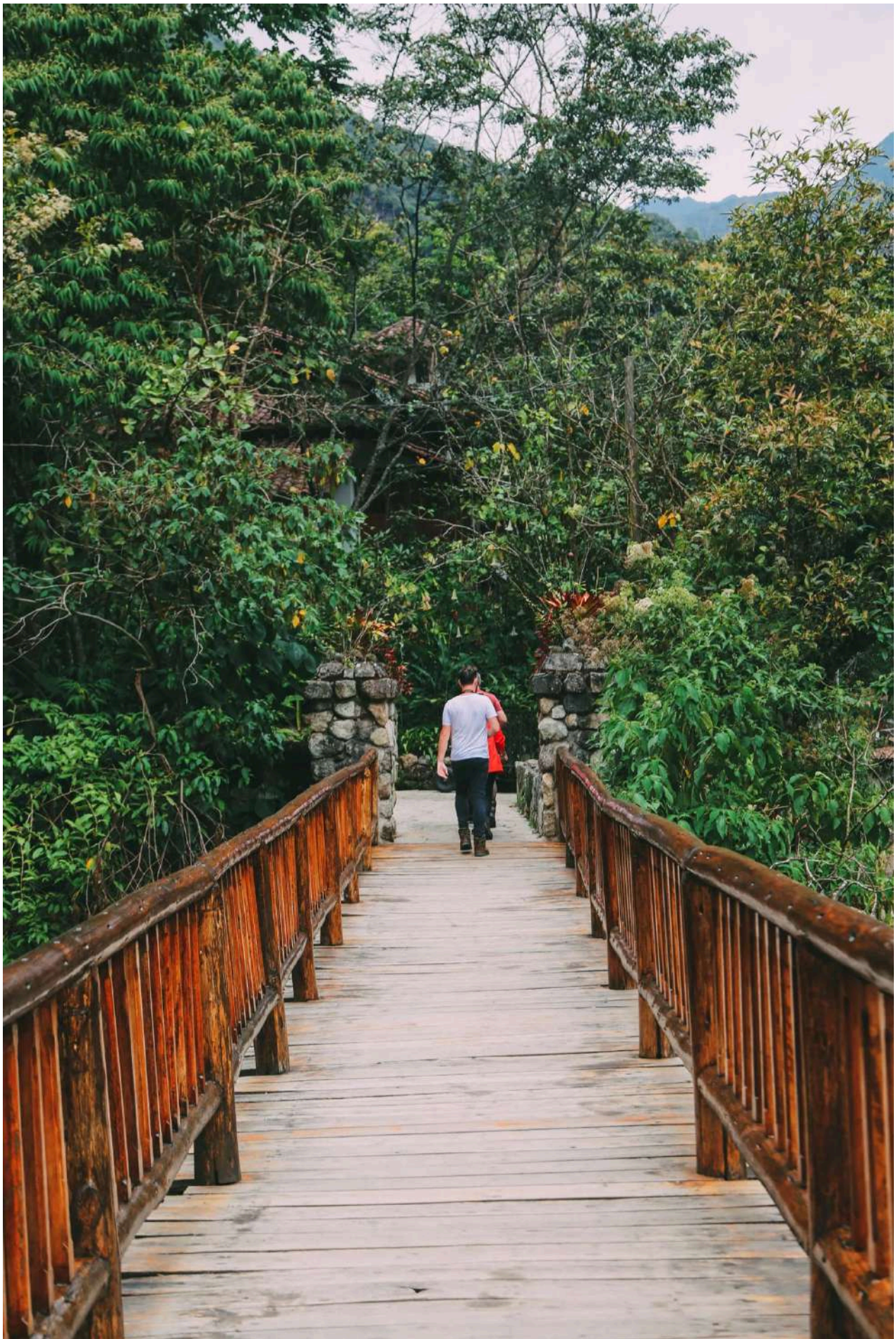
Our walk was also a great excuse to walk around Aguas Calientes (a.k.a Machupicchu)...

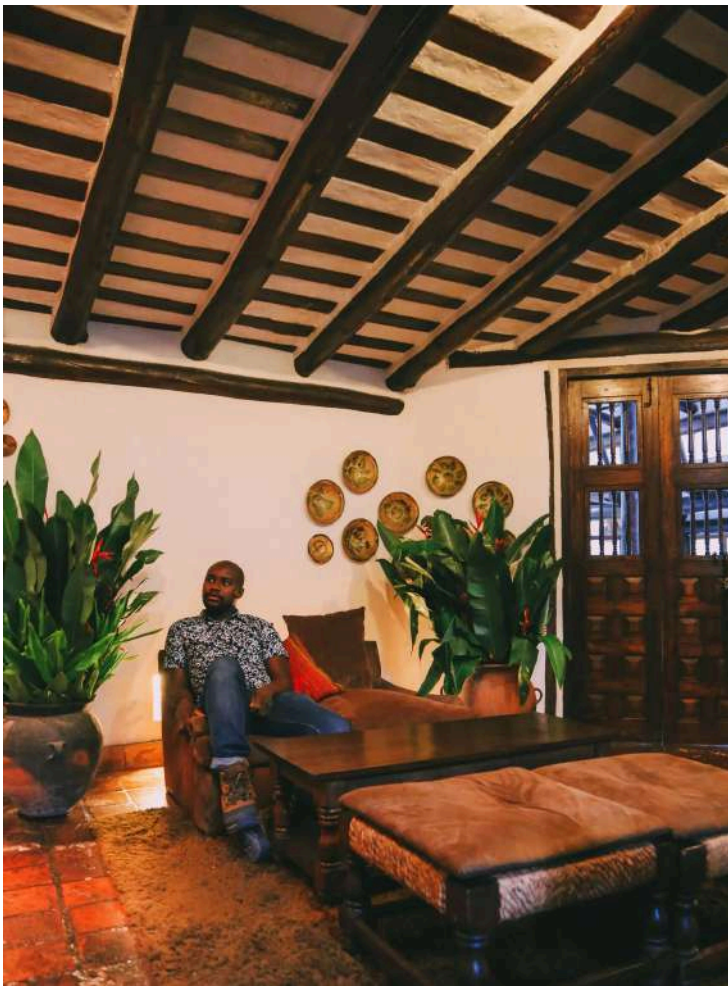




Eventually, we headed back to the hotel to check out the other activities at the hotel.

See, Inkaterra organizes free tours (you can pick a couple) and so we decided to go on a tea plantation tour to pick and make our own tea (seems so apt, seeing as we're British and pretty much drink it by the gallon back home 😊) and also on an evening walk to explore ancient Inca sights.





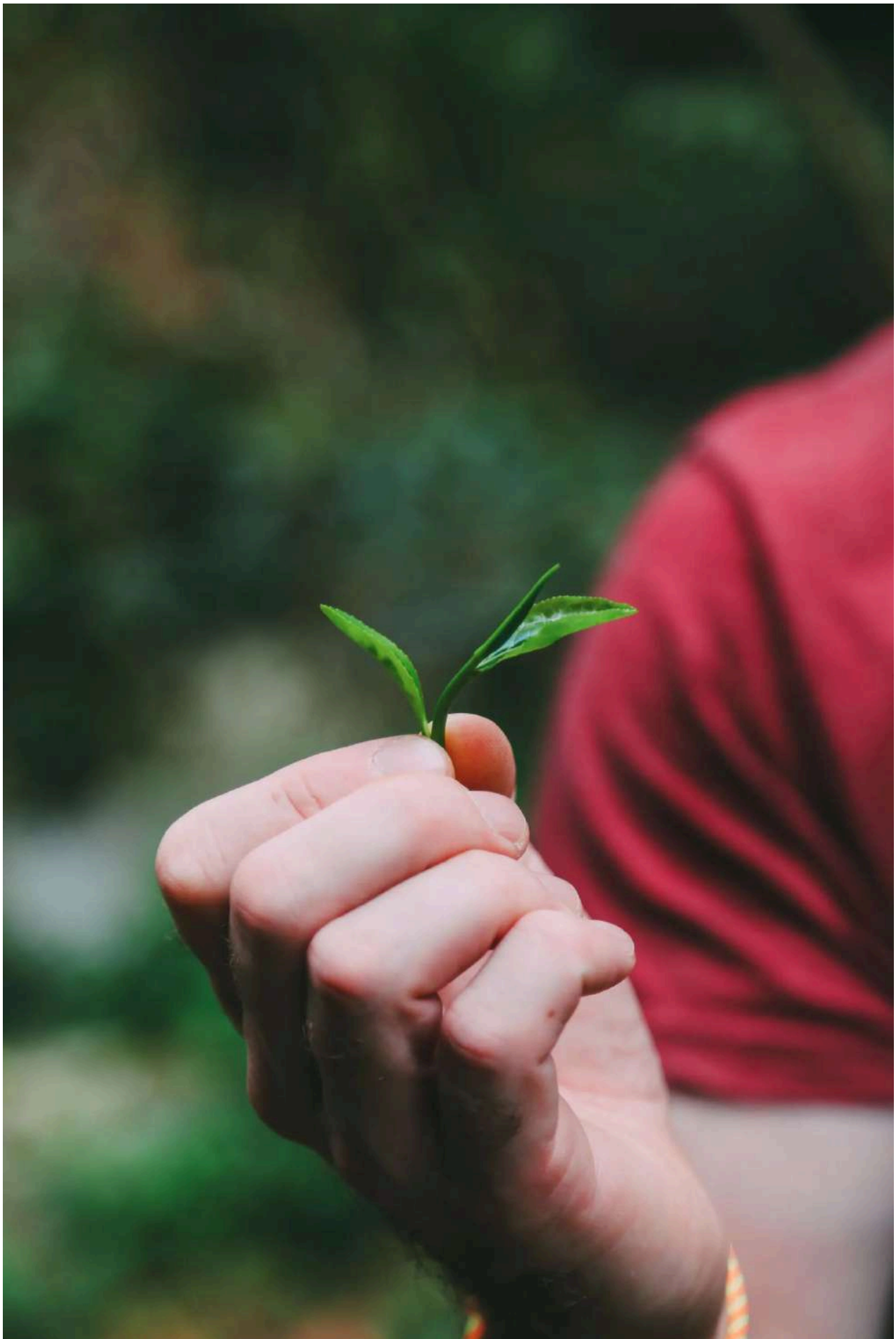
Tea making is so much more interesting than it sounds, especially so when done with friends, pisco sours added (you get a couple of these on the house when you arrive).



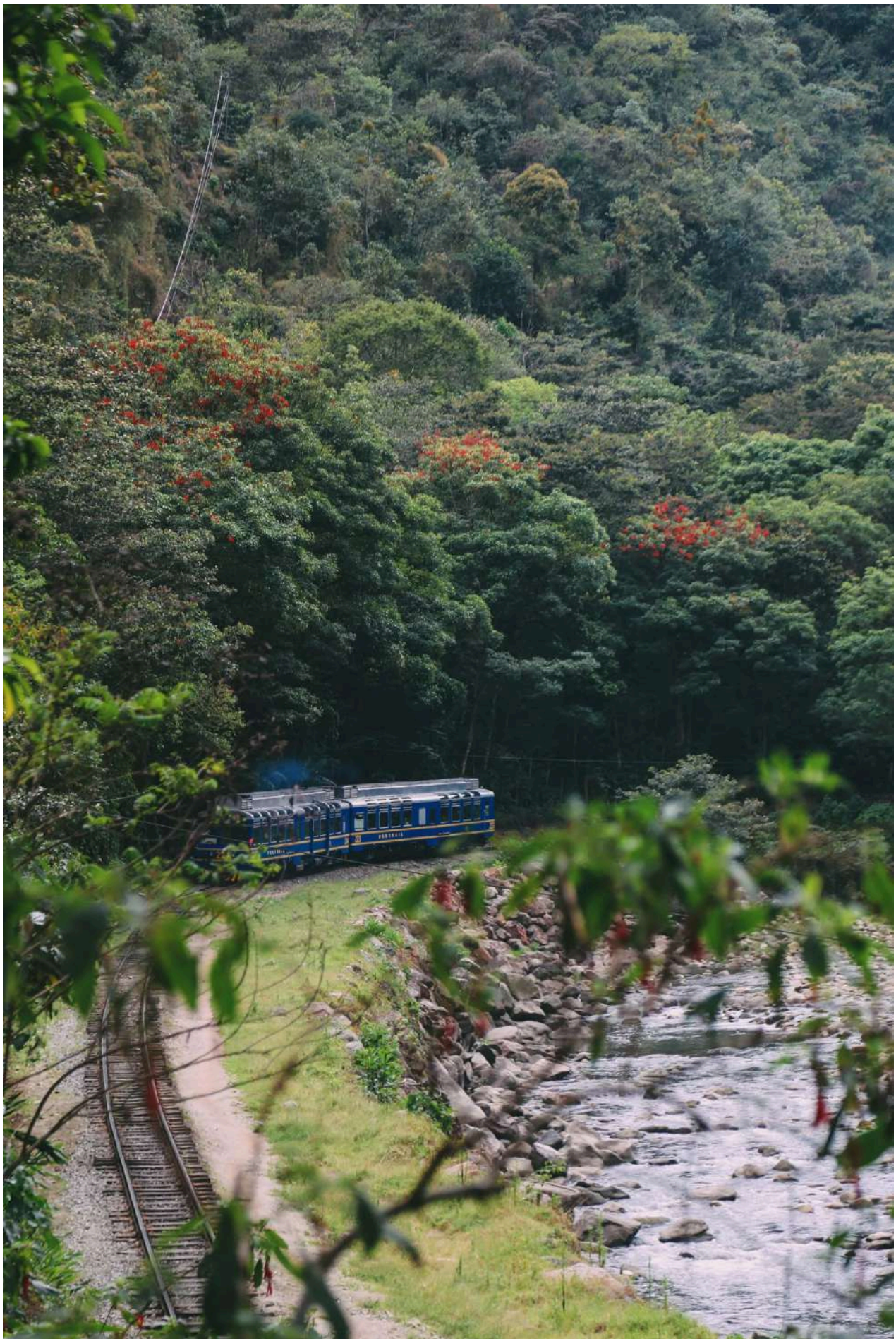








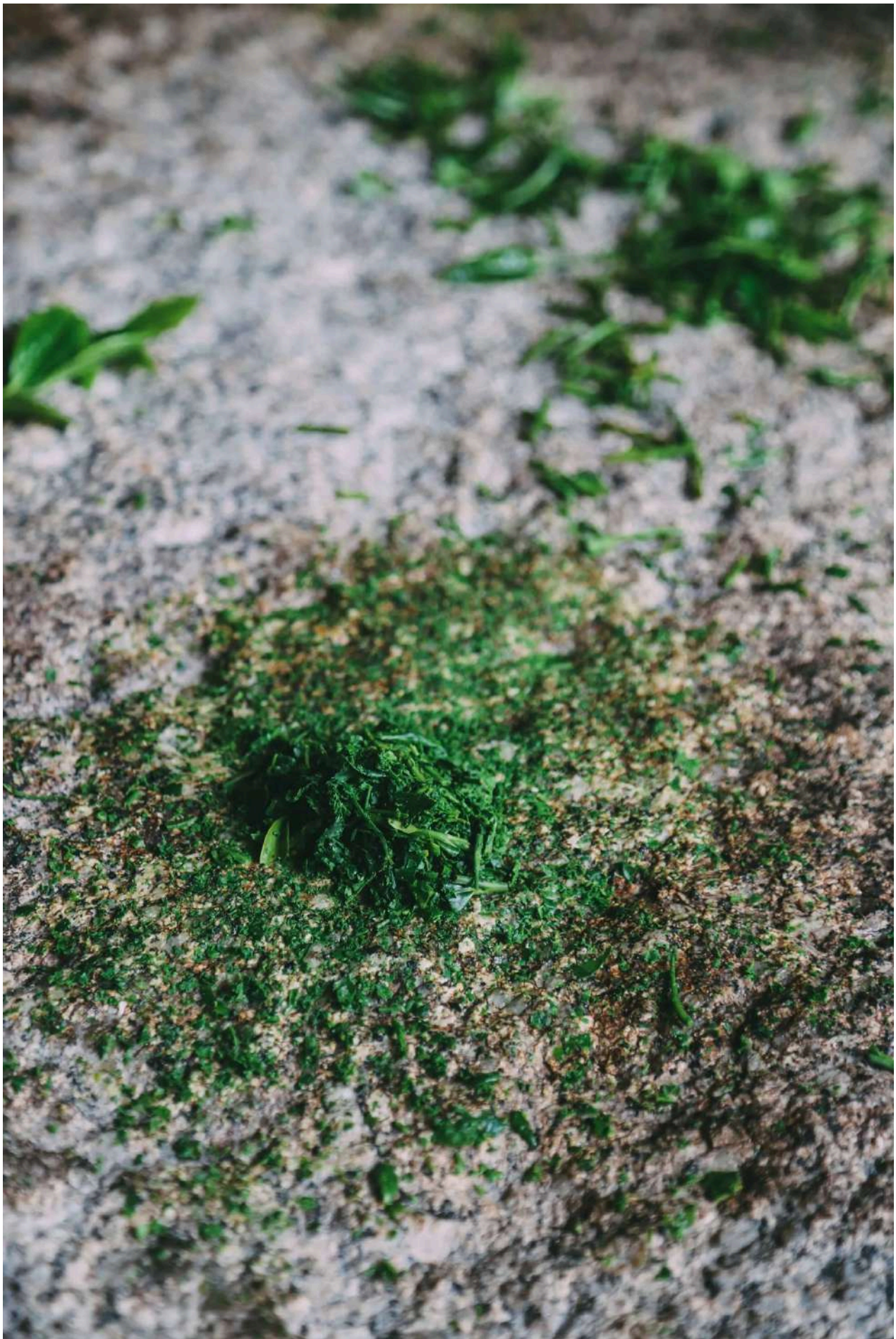




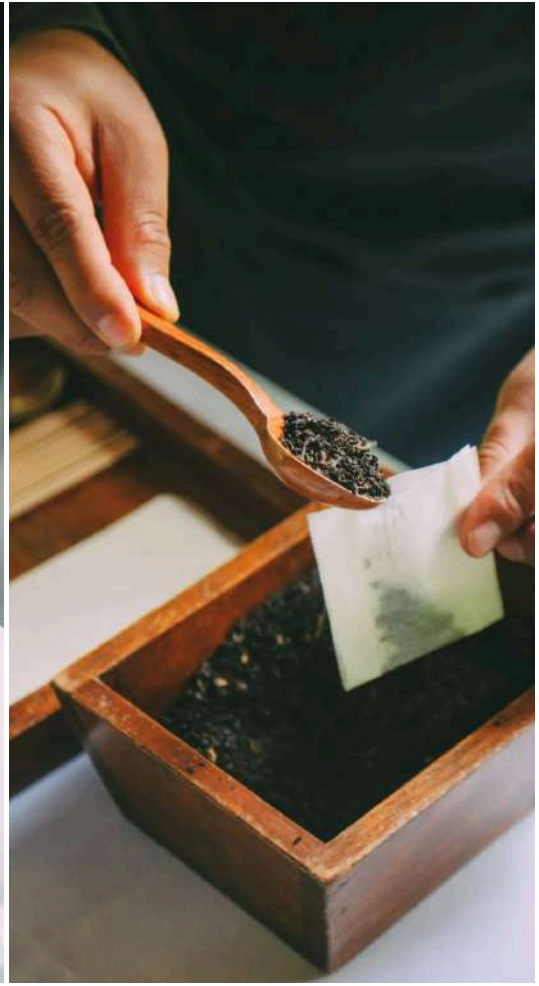
You can't actually drink the tea you pick on the same day (it needs time to dry) so after picking and processing tea for the next visitors, you get to bag tea made by the visitors before you, hence seeing the entire process from start to finish before heading over to the bar to brew yourself some of that Peruvian tea (some serious farm to table stuff here 😊).



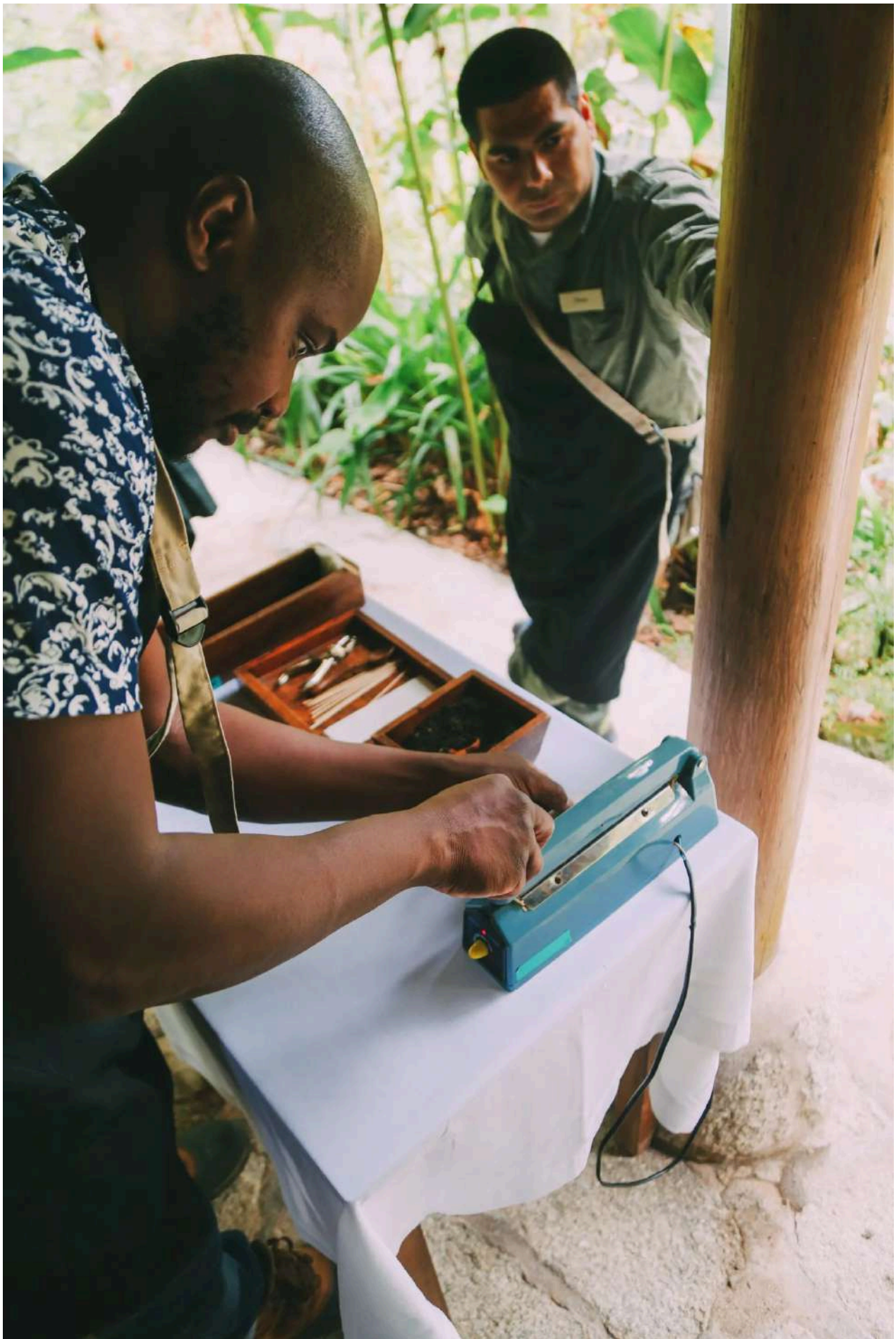














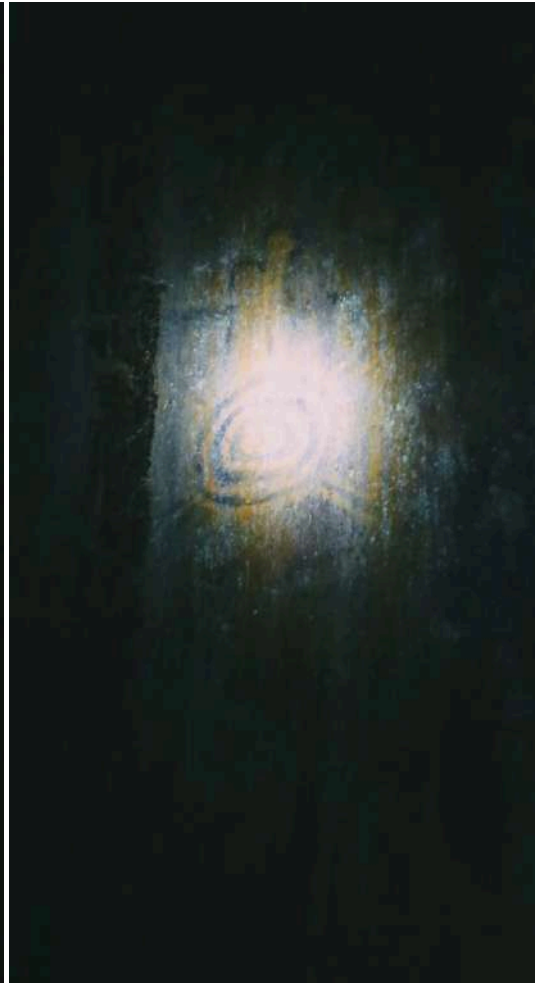


Time flies by quickly here and before long, it was time for our evening jaunt.



The guide gives you a lantern each, which you don't need at the start but fairly quickly need to light. On the walk, you get to learn so much more about Inca customs, traditions and beliefs. You then get taken to an important Inca site (one that is still used and visited by the locals) with carvings on the rocks. Alas, taking a photo of this in pitch black is near impossible but if you squint you can see a bit of it in the photo below. 😊





Walk over with, we headed back to the hotel for a quick change and popped out for dinner.



Dinner was at [Inkaterra](#) and is definitely worth it (even visitors who aren't staying at the hotel vie for a table here).

We started off with salmon (paired with a light rose) before moving onto a beautifully cooked steak and finished off with ice creams and a delicious chocolate-y dessert.







Dinner over and done with, we hurried off to pack our travel essentials (raincoats, water bottles, hiking boots...etc) and get in as much sleep as possible before our 3 am wake up – tomorrow would bring Machu Picchu and this was one sight we were definitely all looking forward to!

