

CAPE BRETON POST



HAVE A SUSTAINABLE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME

Hotels working to protect Peru's beauty and diversity

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20 enero 2025 [+8 más](#) DEBBIE OLSEN Debbie Olsen is an award-winning Métis writer and a national bestselling author. Follow her adventures at wanderwoman.ca.

From a bluff overlooking the ancient city of Machu Picchu, the Andes mountains stretch as far as the eye can see — shrouded in mist and mystery. Like many people who come to this icon of Inca culture, Peru had long been at the top of the bucket list for my husband and me. During our travels in Peru, we wanted to visit ancient archeological sites, but we also wanted to do it in a way that allowed us to experience Peruvian culture and the ecological diversity of the country. Most of all, we wanted to do it in a sustainable way.

**FIRST STOP: MACHU PICCHU
— UNEXPECTED ECOTOURISM**

TRAVELS IN PERU

On a private guided tour of the Machu Picchu archeological site, our guide Oscar Huarcaya explained that most modern-day archeologists believe this ancient site served as a royal estate for Inca emperors and nobles.

“We don’t know the original name of this site,” he explained. “It sits between two mountain peaks, Machu Picchu and Huayna Picchu. When the American explorer Hiram Bingham was directed to the site by locals in the Quechua language, he thought the directions were the name of the site.”



Walking along pathways created by an ancient civilization was everything I imagined it would be. But it was the scenery and natural beauty that sur-

rounds the famous citadel that captivated me — both on and off the tour. I couldn't help thinking that this natural beauty may have prompted the Incas to build in this place.



We enjoyed the natural beauty at Machu Picchu and in our hotel that sits in the valley below it. Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel sits on about five hectares of cloud forest and we

wandered nature trails, went bird watching and explored the orchid gardens, which contain the world's largest native orchid collection with more than 370 species. I also took a free tour of the tea house and learned about growing and processing organic



Machu Picchu is an experience of a lifetime, but there are many other amazing sites and experiences to enjoy in Peru, writes Debbie Olsen, pictured with her husband, Greg.



There are many sites to explore in Cusco.

tea. The hotel is more than just a place to stay while you explore a popular tourism attraction — it's a nature sanctuary.



Get a bird's-eye view of the rainforest from an elevated canopy walkway or stop in at a traditional weaving shop.



The Moray archeological site features circular depressions.



EXPLORING THE SACRED VALLEY — AGRITOURISM TRAVELS IN PERU

With a temperate climate, fertile soil and abundant fresh water, the Sacred Valley was an important agricultural

region for the ancient Incas and it still is today. Our second stay was at Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba, which sits on about 40 hectares of land in the Town of Huayocari, about 60 kilometres northwest of Cusco. The on-site restaurant sources produce from a four-hectare organic plantation.

We used our time in this region to explore the archeological site of Moray and the salt mines of Maras, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The terraced circular depressions at Moray were likely used by the Incas for agricultural purposes. The terraces work a little like a greenhouse — regulating temperatures and providing the ability to cultivate a variety of crops at high altitudes. The salt mines are still actively harvested today and we had the chance

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to watch locals harvesting salt just as it would have been done in ancient times.

A variety of free tours are included with a stay at Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba and my husband and I participated in a chicha de jora tour to learn more about the traditional Peruvian beverage made from fermented germinated corn. “Chicha is almost sacred in Peru,” explained our tour guide, Hiroshi Sánchez. “The Inca used chicha for ritual purposes and even today the first chicha is used to bless the seeds.” Sánchez also explained that a red flag outside a business or home marks a chicharia, a place where you can purchase chicha. This made me feel like I was part of a secret club.

CUSCO — VIBRANT TRAVELS IN PERU

Cusco was the capital of the Inca empire 600 years ago and today it is a vibrant mix of old and new — the oldest continuously inhabited city in South America. We stayed at Inkaterra La Casona, a renovated 16th century casona tucked away in a quiet plaza. We loved wandering the cobblestone streets, exploring local shops and seeing the Plaza de Armas, Coricancha (the Inca Temple of the Sun) and the beautiful Cusco Cathedral. We also loved our hotel and its excellent restaurant. This was the first Relais & Chateaux property in the country and I enjoyed some of the best Peruvian cuisine of our entire trip at this 11-room property.

EXPLORING THE AMAZON — ECO-LUXURY TRAVELS IN PERU

To experience the ecological diversity of Peru, you must spend time exploring the Amazon region. Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica is located in a 17,000-hectare private ecological

reserve in the Southern Peruvian rainforest, one of the most biodiverse places on the planet. Over three days, we enjoyed a variety of included excursions and a comfortable stay in a private wooden cabana with delicious meals included. We saw wildlife and birdlife in Tambopata National Reserve, marvelled at some enormous spiders on a night tour of the jungle, enjoyed a twilight boat tour to see nocturnal species and got a bird's-eye view of the rainforest from an elevated canopy walkway that reminded me of the rope bridges in the movie, Jumanji: The Next Level. Inkaterra has been managing this region of the rainforest for research and ecotourism since 1978 — hoping to replace illegal mining and deforestation with a sustainable alternative.

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 Solo seniors
 CBBB sees highest share of lone seniors ever in Canada

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FEATURE
 'They've done a lot for me'
 Business founder artist credits Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design



SOLO SENIORS
 CBBB sees highest share of lone seniors ever in Canada

By [Name]

As the number of seniors living alone continues to rise, the Cape Breton Branch of the Canadian Red Cross (CBBB) is seeing a significant increase in the number of lone seniors in the region.

The CBBB reports that the number of lone seniors in the region has increased by 15 per cent in the last year. This is due to a number of factors, including the loss of a spouse, the death of a partner, and the aging of the population.

The CBBB is providing support and services to lone seniors, including financial counseling, legal advice, and emotional support. The organization is also working to raise awareness of the challenges faced by lone seniors and to provide resources to help them live independently.

'They've done a lot for me'
 Business founder artist credits Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design

By [Name]

A local artist and business founder has credited the Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design for helping her to develop her business and her craft.

The artist, who has been working in the craft industry for over 20 years, has found a supportive community at the Centre for Craft and Design. She has been able to learn from other artists, share her own experiences, and receive feedback on her work.

The Centre for Craft and Design has provided her with the resources and support she needs to succeed in her business. She has been able to expand her customer base, improve her marketing, and create new products.

"They've done a lot for me," she says. "I've learned so much from the people at the Centre, and I've been able to grow my business in a way that I couldn't have done on my own."

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