

Long Journey Home

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Saturday to Monday, October 16-18, 2004

So I'm pretty sure I am in trouble. I hear that Lan Peru went on strike the day after I flew on it from Lima to Cusco. And I am supposed to fly back to Lima on it Sunday morning. No train. Bus takes two days and these people (remember the one lane dirt road with switchbacks?) say it is dangerous! There is another airline and maybe the tour company (Enjoy Peru) can help.

Anyways, Machu Picchu was the climax of the adventure and all that remains is to get home, the denouement. I'm not sure who else would have appreciated it like I did. Prolly neither Daisy nor Lance. I sure did though.

Well it's 9pm Friday here in Aguas Calientes and I'll read for a spell. For some reason, none of the windows latch or close securely.

Now 6am on Saturday. Dogs are a-barking. Roosters are a-crowing. Incans are a-rock chipping. No kidding, the guy was bashing rocks with rocks at 6am.

Breakfast was awesome. Fresh omelette. One egg or two? Three!! Ok!! Bacon, home made potato wedges, fried bananas. Left a \$3 tip, which is huge.

Gave cleaning guy \$3 so I could pilfer the Cerveza Real beer bottle opener for Mark Hoernis. That's not really stealing is it?

Met Marit, Dave and Jayne after breakfast so I could needle them some more. Last night was Jayne's turn to get sick, from the papaya. I guess she was hurting pretty bad for an hour. No phone in her room either. We did nothing but eat and shop until train at 3:30. Bought some garish earrings for my mother and some nice ones for Robin.

Lunch was good, but too much. Alpaca was pretty good, zero cholesterol. Had a nice little cream-puff-ish dessert.

Assigned seat was next to Jayne again. Marit and Dave were in another train car. Completely full and no leg room for 3.5 hours.

HILARIOUS STORY: Two people directly across from Jayne and me, as well as two across the aisle were from Montreal. Let's see what I can recall. The Federal Reserve is private and owned by reptilian people from another planet. Bush and Kerry are both members of the same secret society serving the reptiles. Iraq war is an attempt to pull down the US so that a new world government (run by the reptiles) can take over.

Dude (Pierre) was really into it, so I couldn't resist pumping him. He went on to other topics like extra-terrestrials, teleportation, etc, but just briefly. He showed the pyramid on the back of the US \$1 bill as proof. The eye above the pyramid is a reptilian eye. There you go! The pyramid is a part of their secret geometry. Probably two hours of this wonderful in-flight entertainment. Priceless, but free.

Somehow, they discovered a shaman in Aguas Calientes who was a "channel" for Sainte Germaine, who lived for 300+ years in Europe. The shaman was sitting on Machu Picchu fifteen years ago and something brushed his face and he started "channel"-ing some Incan chants, fifteen years ago.

Different hotel tonight in Cusco, about a block from the old one. Right on the main square, nice room. All tourists here, although not many are from the US. Lots of Australians, Japanese, Europeans, and especially Brazilians and Argentines.

Watched a little baseball, until 17-8 for the stupid Yankees. Looking mighty grim for the Red Sox. Slept ok, except that makes 3 headaches in 3 nights in Cusco. Hmm.



[Hotel Posadas del Inca, back in Cusco](#)



[Special parade to see me off](#)



[Goodby, Peru! from the Lima airport.](#)

Nice breakfast. Great French Toast and tea. Skipped the runny scrambled eggs. Walked to the square to get a couple more gifts. Picked up two nice high-quality cotton t-shirts saying Machu Picchu. 66 soles.

Noticed that the square was filling up with people, reporters, parade groups, soldiers, etc. A paraplegic basketball team, all on wheelchairs (only ones I saw in Peru -- no ADA here!). Blind people. Talked to a reporter who said there is a once-a-week event by the mayor. Today, they dedicated the ceremony to my departure.

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False alarm with Lan Peru. The strike only lasted a couple days. No problems getting a flight from Cusco to Lima. Funny video on the flight, "Just for Laughs" gags. Funniest was the girl with casts on her feet and a crutch "stuck" in a manhole cover. People kept trying to help her and she'd fall down on purpose. Another was a blind person asking for directions. Path to the destination had a fox-hole trap already rigged, so when the blind man headed towards the destination, he fell into the hole every time. The gags are funny, but the innocent reactions are hilarious.

At Cusco airport, overheard the dude behind me said he was going to Syracuse, but I didn't feel chatty because he was basically a jerk. Ugly American.

Got to Lima at 1:30pm, but flight doesn't leave until 11:55pm. Guy told me the Continental counter opens at 3:00 or so. So I just read my book and sat on a conveyor belt.

At 8pm, Continental finally opened up. I wanted to be first in line to try to get another upgrade to First Class. On check-in, I was told that there was only one seat available and I was first, so far. Checked my bag and went to the gate. At 11:00, they closed the boarding list and told me another guy registered before me! Not possible! It turns out that Continental has a desk at a Marriott in downtown Lima that the guy used to register at 6:54pm. What a Raw Deal. I was quite upset. But I didn't show my anger.

But luck was with me! The flight was delayed by 2.5 hours! How is that good, you ask? While a first class passenger bailed, which opened up a seat for me! So I got to fly first-class both ways! I lost the battle, but won the war. Works for me!

Security was tight in Lima. Searched my luggage and my carry-on. Frisked me twice, both times by a woman.

No easy way to tell Daisy that the flight was delayed. Phone on the plane would cost about \$10 plus \$10 per minute. Not even sure when the next flight from Houston to Austin is that has seats available.

Almost ate the salad with dinner and almost ate the fruit plate for breakfast. Almost. Dinner, at 3am, was snow peas, chicken with mushrooms, ravioli in a white sauce. Skipped the sundae. Slept from 4am to 6:30am.

Back home at around noon. What a trip! It was a blast. Never got sick and never got mugged! Brought lots of stuff I never used (winter coat, sweatshirt, toilet paper, flashlight, etc, etc). Thank you Daisy for letting me go!

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