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First-hand Experience - The key to success

Nothing is better than forwarding information based on **first-hand experience**. Therefore, we went on field excursions in order to get more insight information and to update our travel proposals. This month we experienced a cultural bike tour in Quito, the Lares Track in Peru and a Trip to Torres del Paine in Argentina.

Explore with us less common travel products in our South American destinations!

Enjoy reading!



Cultural City Bike Tour in Quito

Last Month, we discovered Quito in a different way than usual - by bike! Doing the bike tour is not only an environmentally friendly way of discovering Quito but furthermore you will have the possibility to see much more of Quito than by participating in a usual city tour. The groups are small (maximum 7 people) to ensure the optimal experience. Chocolate tasting, history, street art, markets, parks and spectacular views are part of the tour. This tour is perfect for people who want to see something other than 'just' the touristy parts of Quito.

The Tour starts at 9 a.m. in the district 'La Floresta', which is well known for its beautiful street art. Afterwards it continues to 'Guapulo' where you will get in touch with locals. One can say it is of the beaten track of the touristic places of Quito. The next district, visited by the tour, is the 'La Mariscal' area, known for the nightlife, but not less interesting in the daytime. After visiting a local market and sampling some fruits and juices, the tour continues to the oldest park in whole Ecuador: the 'Alameda Park'. Finally, the tour returns to La Floresta where you can recharge your batteries in a nice café where you get a drink and a snack.

The whole tour takes about 3.5 - 4 hours and provides an amazing impression of Quito. Getting in touch with locals and negotiating for the perfect souvenirs to bring home, is a great experience. Furthermore, trying local food and almost burning them immediately after to prevent getting a muffin top from the tasty dishes, feels good. However, don't worry, it is an easy tour and you will not be exhausted after. We can clearly recommend trying this tour!



Lares Trek - the true Andean cultural experience

The Lares Trek is a trail, which is a great alternative to the Classic Inca Trail. It starts 150 km north of Cusco in the Lares Valley, east of the Urubamba mountain range, which traverses part of the Sacred Valley. The trek can be completed as a 2, 3 or 4-day trail. Additionally, it can be combined with a visit to Machu Picchu – extending the tour by 1 or 2 days. There are a number of variations of the Lares Trek, most end at Ollantaytambo. From here, trekkers can catch a train to Aguas Calientes to visit Machu Picchu or return to Cusco.

A number of factors make this trek a great alternative to the Classic Inca Trail. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly for some, is that it is a lot quieter than Inca Trail. Secondly, the route is easier and shorter than the Inca Trail. Finally, the Lares Trek has the benefit of providing a true Andean cultural experience. The Lares Valley is home to numerous traditional Andean communities that have changed little in the last 500 years.

The best time to do the Lares Trek is during the dry season (May-September). It is the third most popular trek to Machu Picchu, after the Classic Inca and Salkantay, so during the peak season the trail can be busy. Still, there are so many variations on the Lares Trail that in general the routes never feel over-crowded. During April and October, the Lares Trails are particularly quiet, and weather is often very pleasant. We suggest avoiding December through March as rain makes the trail unpleasant and the view is limited, due to heavy morning and late afternoon fog.

Lares to Patacancha is one of the most popular Lares trek variations to Machu Picchu, mainly because it is the shortest (~33km) and easiest (only one big pass at 4,450m). The route takes three days to trek (one extra day to visit Machu Picchu) and takes trekkers through two interesting communities at Huacahuasi and Patacancha.



FAM Trip to Torres del Paine

Torres del Paine National Park – home to some of the most iconic mountain peaks in the world and a dream for everyone in search of adventure. It surely does no longer count as an insider tip, but with the right timing and itinerary one can still find the peace and quiet to take in its breathtaking landscapes.

To get the full experience it is recommendable to spend at least four nights in the homey Refugios and campsites along the W-trail, the most famous trail in the park. Since the number of hikers has been regulated (hikers have to show their reservation for accommodation at the entrance and the amount of beds available has been reduced), the hiking-experience became a lot more pleasant. However, this makes it necessary to plan a trip, well in advance.

To avoid peak season, we definitely suggest to book a trip in the quieter months October or March and one can still get very lucky with the weather. The picture was taken at the end of our four-day-hike in October and as you can see: Sun everywhere while the lagoon at the foot of Las Torres was still covered in snow and ice!

Hiking Torres del Paine with breathtaking views of the iconic Torres, the monumental Los Cuernos, Glaciar Grey and lakes of all shades of blue, it is easy to understand why it is the destination in southern Chile. Plan it well and you will still get the explorer-feel that makes Patagonia so exciting!



Galapagos quality check & WTM London

Last month, Kai Single, the general manager of Latventure Ecuador, spent 2 weeks at the Galapagos Islands doing a comprehensive hotel and activity check. Like this, we can guarantee you the quality of the hotels we are offering as well as add great new hotels to our portfolio. He also participated in several activities like doing the hike to cerro crocket on Santa Cruz, explore North Seymour, go kayaking at Tintoreras, explore the wall of tears by bike on Isabela and discover a new walking path, visit Isla Española, and explore the boat trip “tour 360°” which leads all around San Cristobal visiting several spots of the island.

For the first time, we can announce that we will participate in the WTM in London this year. It will take place from the 5th till 7th of November at the ExCel Convention Center and you can find us at booth LA150. We are looking forward to meeting you there!



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