

## It's fast, it's slow, it's cheap, it's expensive. It's Beautiful. It's Peru!



That's Becky from our Redwood City store, sent to the sale mines after a bad Yelp review. I'm going to have to find less-expensive ways to deal with such things in the future!

Welcome to Peru, an interesting place to be sure... we've just been here one full day and we've-

- Seen proof of ancient astronauts (actually who knows that they came in space ships; maybe they had transporters, and if so, they wouldn't be "astronauts" right?)
- Hiked to elevations that somebody forget to add air to
- Tried Alpaca for dinner (no, it doesn't taste like chicken; rather, it tastes exactly like regular old beef)
- Visited a "demonstration village" where a woman was explaining that this large piece she wove took 2 months to make, this one 4 months, amid a huge pile of admittedly-nice woven fabrics, and I didn't have the heart to tell her that her math didn't add up; if she'd really spent that much time on each one, she'd be 112 years old by now
- Looked for a place that sells iPhone simcards and have come up empty-handed
- Found that none of my high school Spanish has been retained (no surprise)

I'm able to get pretty good Internet coverage on my phone using AT&T's roaming plan, but that's not terribly cheap (although it does now include unlimited texting). The free WiFi in hotels appears to be coming from a phone network, not cable, and, split up between every user in the hotel, it's pretty darned slow.

But the things we've seen have been pretty amazing. The Inca were incredible builders, figuring out how to get the most out of the land, doing things with stone that have to be seen to be believed, and making you wonder why they weren't the dominating culture taking over Europe, instead of the other way around.

Tomorrow we tour more Inca sites, along with the large market in Pisac, before taking a train to Machu Picchu, which should be the highlight of the trip. Up to this point most things have been pretty inexpensive; Machu Picchu changes that in a hurry. The only way you can get there is by train, or hiking the Inca Trail for 5 days (we didn't have 5 days), and a town maintained by rail alone is not a cheap town to get a room. Or anything else.

Our tour guide, Oscar Guevara, is someone we found through Tripadvisor, and has been wonderful. He speaks English very well, knows the area, and handles all of our sight-seeing and airport transfers in the Sacred Valley for a very reasonable fee. More info on him in future posts.

For now, time to get to bed. It's 3 hours ahead of the Bay Area here, and it's a big day tomorrow and Wednesday. Thursday we see a few more things on the way back to the airport, then fly to Lima to spend the night before getting up at a ridiculous hour (2am?) to

catch a flight home. Working on changing the logistics of that!