

Peru North & Amazon

Tumbes

Piura

Chiclayo

Trujillo

Huaraz

Cajamarca

Chachapoyas

Tarapoto

Iquitos

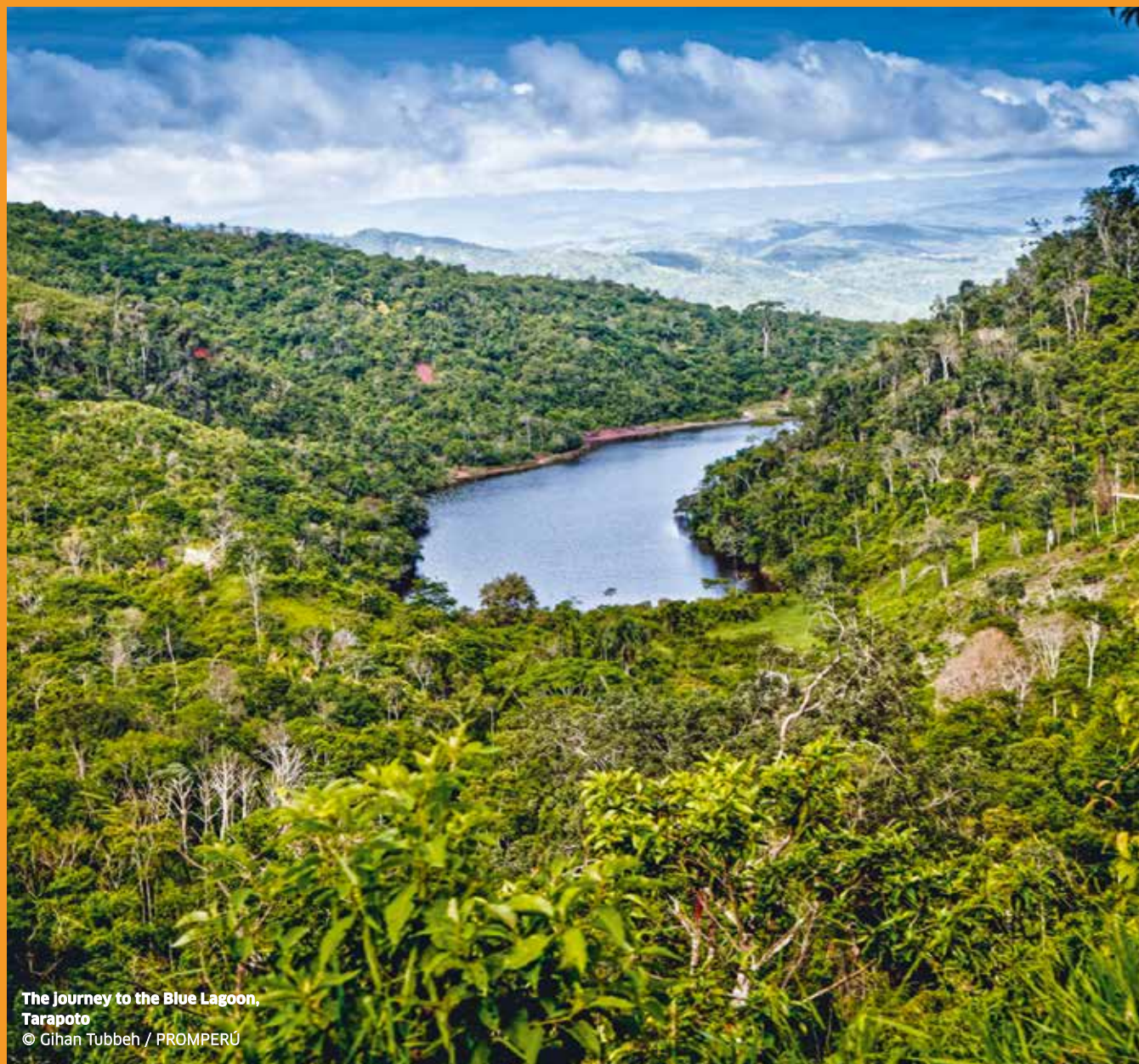


Kuélap Monumental Archaeological Zone

Amazonas







**The Journey to the Blue Lagoon,
Tarapoto**
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Peru North & Amazon



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Peru North & Amazon



The north is so much more than the coast, the cebiche, and waves that challenge surfers from all over the world. The jungle is so much more than a sequence of winding rivers in the midst of lush forests that delight adventurers and birdwatchers. Peru North & Amazon is filled with stories that dwell in its streets, in the culture of its cuisines, in the remnants of its pre-Columbian civilizations, and in its contrasting, magnetic, and endlessly surprising natural landscapes.

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A Mexican chef discovers Tumbes and a Scottish cook lands in Iquitos

REPORT

By Claudia Sofía Von
Culinary storytaker



It starts here: a crumbling swimming pool and three chefs. The former was once part of the Cabo Blanco Fishing Club, a fisherman's paradise frequented by Ernest Hemingway, John Wayne, and Marilyn Monroe. The scene's other characters are discussing the richness and condition of the Peruvian sea, and the traditions and sustainability of our gastronomy. As we sit above what used to be the pool, we watch the sunset and feel immersed in the sound of our ocean's savage waves.

Pasadito is a typical dish from Piura. It uses grouper, a deep-sea fish with white meat that is endemic to the northern coast. All that is needed is a splash of water and a little salt. Máncora chef Omar Ríos applies this same minimalist maxim later when he receives the explorers in Flora Calderón's Lo de Florita restaurant, where some of the region's best cebiches, *sudados*, and stews are served. Here, together with José del Castillo—chef and owner of Isolina (placed 13th on the 2018 list of Latin America's 50 Best Restaurants)—and Francesca Ferreyros, —head of kitchen at IK following six years away in Thailand cooking with the Indian chef Gaggan Anand—they are learning how to prepare *parihuelas*, lobsters, and *sudados*. They say only Florita knows how to make *sudado* with lobster that is cooked in its own *chicha de jora*, an ancestral fermented drink made with corn.

Even in the center of tradition there is room for innovation. Omar, for example, has decided to prepare his *atún añejo* (aged tuna): he cooks the fish on a grill and tops it with a sauce of carob and honey. So this is Peruvian cuisine: a living expression.

The idea of deepening knowledge about the world's leading culinary markets lies at the center of 50 Best Explores—one of the most creative experiences arising from The World's 50 Best Restaurants brand. According to Laura Price, spokesperson and assistant editor of the organization, "50 Best Explores Peru is the second chapter in a series that began in Thailand two years ago with a visit to the Chiang Mai area by chefs Joan Roca, from El Celler de Can Roca; Peter Gilmore, from Quay, and Ashley Palmer-Watts, from Dinner by Heston Blumenthal." As an experience, it seeks to connect local and international chefs with everything that goes into a dish—the land, the product, and the culture. It also aims to use gastronomy to shine a light on the issue of sustainability.



Peru is a paradise, just as tropical as Indonesia, and with resources over its land, in its rivers, and under the sea. Peruvians have discovered their own diversity and want to share it with others beyond their borders. 50 Best Explores, one of the most creative experiences arising from The World's 50 Best Restaurants brand, was more than just a journey—it was an invitation to explore Tumbes and Iquitos in a different way: consuming culture.



Peru's pantry is diverse. And its chefs reflect this through creative preparations, not only in Lima—recognized as the gastronomic capital of Latin America—but also in other locations inside the country, and beyond its borders. For example, Daniela Soto-Innes, chef and partner in New York's Cosme (currently ranked 25th on the famous list), invited to join the 50 Best Explores, says: "If they have the best restaurants, it is for a reason: the product they have is unique. They decide to go into the middle of the jungle looking for a particular ingredient. It's mad, but brilliant!"

Sea of fauna

We are awakened by the breach of a humpback whale. Of the eighty-four known species of whale, thirty-two reach our coasts. The blue whale, the largest living creature on the planet, is a frequent visitor. But it is the rise over the water of the humpbacks that we want to witness. It can reach sixteen meters in length. Sustainability depends on us understanding the sea as an extension of the land rather than as a food store to be plundered for our consumption "The Peruvian sea is one of the most fertile in the world; we still have time to conserve it if we manage to reset the compass,"

1. Without borders. Chefs Jock Zonfrillo, Diego Muñoz, James Lowe, and Matías Cillóniz at Pedro Miguel Schiaffino's Ámaz restaurant, following a journey of exploration to Iquitos.

says marine biologist Sebastián Silva, who organizes whale watching tours and promotes alternatives to fishing. Ecotourism is aligned with the protection of biodiversity, and is growing via species observation, scuba diving, and recreational fishing.

On the third day, we head for the mangroves—the last natural frontier before reaching Ecuador. There, the ocean and the river fuse together: 80% salt water and 20% fresh water. This balance is also on display in the famous and precious *concha negra* (black shell clam), a species that is in need of protection but which also form part of Peru's culinary tradition.

Prime forest

Goldenberry, moriche, cranberry, *arazá*, *camu camu*, star fruit, *cocona*, custard apple. The fruit supply in Lima may carry amusing names, but it is a mere pocket book compared to the encyclopedia that is the jungle. Just as 70% of the fish that reaches Lima comes from the north, so too 70% of the varieties of fruit come from the Amazon. Sixty percent of our territory is covered in jungle; yet our knowledge of its diversity and cultural richness is incipient. Maybe this is because the jungle, like magic, is never easy, and always surprises.

- 2. **Through the mangroves.** Daniela Soto-Innes, of New York's Cosme restaurant, and Francesca Ferreyros, the chef at Lima's IK, explore the Tumbes mangroves.
- 3. **Grill.** Amazon fish in Iquitos. © Goyo Barragán for The World's 50 Best Restaurants
- 4. **Customs and practices.** A tapioca dish in Mó Bistró, the restaurant of Matías Cillóniz. © Goyo Barragán for The World's 50 Best Restaurants



A journey to the north east requires explorers who are expert in remote communities. Pedro Miguel Schiaffino receives them, ready for the adventure. This chef, researcher, and owner of *Ámaz* and *Malabar*—both on the list of the best restaurants in Latin America—currently runs the organization *Despensa Amazon*. The program develops projects in Iquitos and in the heart of the *Pacaya Samiria* reserve. Schiaffino has spent more than a decade bringing ingredients from the Amazon to Lima, and then experimenting with them in his kitchens. “Our goal is to make the communities in this region sustainable on their own. It is necessary to bring Amazon cuisine to the rest of South America,” says the chef.

The leader of the party is Jock Zonfrillo, a Scottish chef who is researching Aboriginal culinary products and techniques in Australia. *Orana*, his restaurant and foundation, has just received the prestigious *Basque Culinary World Prize*. We are accompanied by *Matías Cillóniz*, a young chef who also experiments with ingredients native to our territory from his kitchen in Lima. “It is not easy working with native communities. The first thing you have to do is to earn their trust, and then show that your interest is consistent,” says Zonfrillo, who has been doing work similar to Schiaffino's for more than ten years on the other side of the world.

The jungle keeps you alert. These will be four days for intensely absorbing knowledge, new names, and ancient cultures that have been preserved over time, a time in parallel to that we know in

“If they have the best restaurants, it is for a reason: the product they have is unique. They decide to go into the middle of the jungle looking for a particular ingredient. It's mad, but brilliant!” says Daniela Soto-Innes, the Mexican chef in charge of *Cosme*, in New York.



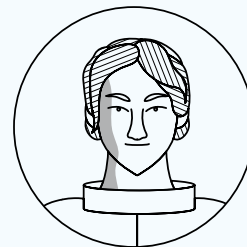
western Peru. The short trip to Pucaurquillo, a community five hours away by motor boat on the banks of the Ampiyacu River, offers just the first glimpse. There the Bora and the Huitoto, immigrant communities from the rubber fever era, turn the *yuca brava*—poisonous in its natural state—into a varied source of nutrition: black chili or *tucupi* (seasoning obtained by cooking the yuca extract), *casabe* (cassava bread), and tapioca. The ancestral knowledge of these friendly and warm communities is as mighty as their rivers. The stews they offer us are delicious: cacao, soups with doncella fish, fruits of all colors, elongated pineapples, passion fruit with yellow skin, macambo white beans, and bananas of incomparable sweetness.

“It’s been five years since I was last in the jungle and coming back this time has made me realize that I want to return again,” says Jock, now back in Iquitos. “Most chefs around the world are looking for ways to generate techniques that reveal the flavor in the simplest way. But here, Peruvians have been doing it for hundreds of years.” Lost among the alleys in the Belén market, the proof is everywhere: lizard, suri, turtle eggs, goldenberry, moriche, cranberry, *arazá*, *camu camu*, star fruit, *cocona*, custard apple. At night, in the restaurant Blanquita, while tasting *juane* in all its varieties—with paiche fish, chicken, pork, tacacho, jerky—the chef smiles. For a cook with an explorer’s soul, Iquitos is a party.

5. The mission. The chef Jock Zonfrillo sees value in the recovery of ancestral culinary cultures. © Goyo Barragán for The World’s 50 Best Restaurants

PERSPECTIVES

FRANCESCA FERREYROS
CHEF OF IK RESTAURANT



For eight years I worked in restaurants outside Peru, first in Girona and then in Bangkok. During that time the cuisine I made was not strictly Peruvian. So when I decided to return to my country to settle earlier this year, it was more than coming home. The meaning is emotional and revealing, because I have to relearn and discover the many things that have happened during my foreign parenthesis; for example, reviewing the contemporary pantry of ingredients, connecting with local producers, and, of course, traveling to the interior of the country and continuing to discover new origins and techniques. For me, returning is one more way of learning. That’s why this trip to Tumbes was a new adventure that I took on with enthusiasm and curiosity. Above all, because the issue of responsible fishing is an urgent one that not only affects gastronomy but demands our attention as we work towards sustainability.

So we traveled north and discovered Cabo Blanco, El Ñuro, Máncora, and Zorritos. We were guided by the marine biologist Sebastián Alcorta, who created Pacífico Adventures, a company dedicated to conservation and species sighting. With him, we went out in search of whales. Daniela Soto-Innes and I had to immerse ourselves in the coast and in the mangroves of Tumbes to learn about the ingredients in its primordial ecosystem.

On the trip we discovered not just the products but also the characters who use them every day. For example, when we were in Máncora, we called into the emblematic home of Florita Calderón, a woman who has prepared traditional coastal food for years. Her cebiches, *pasaditos* and lobster *sudados* are legendary. We also met the fishermen of Cabo Blanco. Seventy percent of the fish that reaches restaurants in Lima comes from this area in the north. That shows the importance of the value chain for marine products: discovering the inputs and their potential, together with the inseparable reality of the fishermen, and then committing to their preservation.





6. Adventurers and cooks. The Scot, Jock Zonfrillo, and the Peruvians Pedro Miguel Schiaffino and Matías Cillóniz discover ingredients in the Belén market (Iquitos). **Bottom.** Lobster parihuela in Lo de Florita (Máncora). © Goyo Barragán for The World's 50 Best Restaurants

“It is not easy working with native communities. The first thing you have to do is to earn their trust, and then show that your interest is consistent,” says Zonfrillo, who for ten years in Australia has been doing work similar to that of Pedro Miguel Schiaffino.

PERSPECTIVES

MATÍAS CILLÓNIZ

CHEF AT MÓ BISTRÓ



Since I have been studying the Amazon for many years, the idea of exploring Iquitos with Pedro Miguel Schiaffino thrilled me. I, on the other hand, had only discovered the region through some of its products: paiche, *cocona*, charapita peppers and sacha culantro (coriander). The mere idea of its size and diversity overwhelmed me.

We transferred from a plane to a boat. Six hours to the northeast of Iquitos along the Amazon and then the Ampiyacu River. We saw pink dolphins, forests denser than I had ever imagined, and a cargo ship stranded on a sandbar.

We arrived in Pucaurquillo—a town with two neighboring communities (the Bora and the Huitoto)—on a mission: to discover local ingredients and cuisine. But, above all, to explore the wild yucca and its derivatives: fariña, *casabe*, tapioca, *tucupi* and black chili. The intensity of the flavor was just as I remembered: poisonous and lethal in its natural state, but very tasty after fermenting and cooking over a flame.

The locals extract the whole plant and immediately put down a stake with next season's plant. They then work with the liquid obtained from squeezing the pulp of the wild yucca, grated through a huge sieve, supported by a wooden tripod that is taller than the women who operate it. From one day to the next, in thirty degree heat and at ninety percent humidity, the decanted yucca brava juice develops lactic aromas thanks to fermentation. They then separate the liquid and the starch. Depending on the concentration they reduce, with the liquid they make *tucupi* and black chili. They also obtain smoky and powerful sauces similar to miso pasta, soy sauce, or Australian Vegemite. With the starch they make *casabe* and tapioca—a delicious flat bread—and some balls that they eat toasted and crispy. It is just a small part of a beautiful culture that recurs with some variations throughout the Latin American Amazon. I want more. There is more to explore, taste, learn, and share. For now I will try to honor this memory through a sweet tapioca with pineapple and lemon citron at breakfast, and, at lunch and dinner, with a grilled fish, black pepper, and blanquillos in warm vinaigrette.



The loche, the duck, and those northern objects of desire

COLUMN
By Héctor Solís



Túcume / © Christopher Plunkett / PROMPERÚ

I grew up in Chiclayo on the second floor of a restaurant. We were five siblings in that home located eighteen blocks from the main square. We would spend the afternoons playing with a spinning top or launching ourselves into the sea from the pier at Pimentel. In 1983 my father was fired from his job. So he turned to what my grandfather and great-grandfather had done before him: he opened a restaurant in the house. That's why we moved to the second floor. In the beginning, the carpeted dining room held no more than six tables with tablecloths. People would say to him, disbelievingly: "Who is going to eat goat like this? A fancy restaurant in Chiclayo?"

The first images (and the first aromas) that take me back to the city where I was born are those of my mother in the kitchen of the family restaurant. At fifteen I left Chiclayo to study economics in Lima. Not long afterwards, we again had to move to the second floor. We had opened Fiesta restaurant in Miraflores. By the time I had graduated as a shirt-and-tie economist, I had already done the business case for the

venture. And then my father asked me if I wanted to be the cook. So I swapped the shirt and tie for a chef's coat, and have not taken it off since. I studied Hotel and Restaurant Management at Le Cordon Bleu to learn conservation and techniques for cooking meat. However, I learned much more outside the classroom, when I began to do more research and I decided to travel the interior of the country. Where can one buy the best goat? What type of nutrition does a duck require? In the north alone there are four types, breeds that were first domesticated by the Moche. We work with this knowledge. To prepare a dish such as cebiche, we first need to think about where we will find the ingredients. We use onions from Camaná, garlic from Cajamarca, lemons from Tambo Grande, and the murike grouper fish from Tumbes.

That curiosity and the search for product excellence led me to travel throughout the region in 2012. The result was published in a book, *Lambayeque. La cocina de un gran señor*. I realized how ignorant I had been. I never imagined I would be able to gather

thirty recipes for *arroz con pato* (duck with rice) with marked variations and techniques from regional gastronomy in the interior of Lambayeque, and from women and men who don't have a restaurant of their own and work from their homes instead.

For my most recent project, Chakupe, a deli market in Chiclayo, I want to offer the region's products and display how we build Chiclayan identity today.

The *loche* is just such a product. I bring the one grown in Pómac III, a community located near the Pyramids of Túcume which consists of fifty farming families capable of producing some ten thousand kilos of loche every harvest. Their loches can weigh up to one kilogram. If you draw a map of Lambayeque, each district has its own product with unique characteristics: Chacupe and Batán Grande with their duck; Puerto Eten's lobsters; Ferreñafe's rice; Monsefú's coriander; Callanca's cherry peppers, and Olmos, where the goats are raised with milk and carob. That's where the challenge lies.



A chef born in Chiclayo in the north of the country. He owns three restaurants: Fiesta, La Picantería Surquillo, and La Picantería Pimentel. He has opened a northern deli market, Chakupe, that sells select loche pumpkins, chicha de jora, and cuts of goat and duck. He will soon open a restaurant in Santiago de Chile.



When the compass points north



PHOTOGRAPHIC DOSSIER



CHICAMA, LA LIBERTAD

© Daniel Silva / PROMPERÚ

Every year, thousands of surfers arrive in Chicama, about 30 kilometers from the city of Trujillo, to tame the world's longest wave.

CABO BLANCO, PIURA

© Susu Nasser / PROMPERÚ

Sport fishing is one of Cabo Blanco's principal activities. In 1956 the writer Ernest Hemmingway visited this cove, whose waters abound with species such as swordfish, the black marlin, and the Pacific sailfish.



PACASMAYO, LA LIBERTAD

© Alex Bryce / PROMPERÚ

At the beach resort of Pacasmayo the sea and the brightly colored republican mansions shape the landscape. They are united by Grau esplanade; at the southern end stands the Casa Club Pacasmayo, declared a historic monument in 2002 (pictured in the background), and at the northern stands the historic city pier, built in the 1870s.



Piura

Whales on the horizon

By Belén Alcorta
Ecotourism specialist

Pioneers. Thirteen years ago, together with her husband Sebastian Silva, she founded Pacífico Adventures. They have a marine museum. Between the months of July and October the main activity is humpback whale watching, and they have observed half of the cetacean species that inhabit Peruvian seas.

When my husband Sebastian Silva and I arrived in Los Órganos we had no idea that we were going to dedicate our lives to the humpback whales. Although Sebastian is a marine biologist, my specialty is ecotourism. What we wanted to do was close the circle by putting tourism at the service of ocean conservation. Curiously, I saw my first whale whilst driving along the road at Punta Veleros: it was a huge animal, leaping in the distance out to sea. From the beach we soon saw another whale, and boarded a friend's Zodiac boat for a closer look. Seeing it jump from such proximity was an impressive sight. It was as if time was standing still. Our greatest achievement since

creating Pacífico Adventures has been to showcase the resource through whale watching and drawing attention to the importance of preserving the sea. We are guided by a great team of scientists. We have already published more than ten specialist articles on the humpback whale, which is just one of many other cetacean species that inhabit these waters. This is a truly privileged sea and it deserves to be protected.

Of heroes and tombs

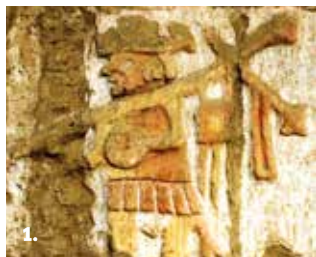
GUIDE



TRUJILLO, LA LIBERTAD

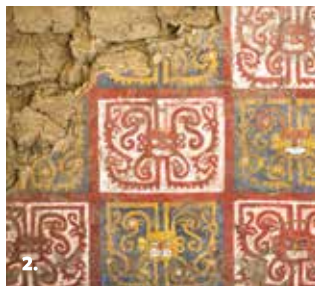
THE STORY OF TWO TEMPLES

The Huaca del Sol (Temple of the Sun) and the Huaca de la Luna (Temple of the Moon) are located five kilometers south of the city of Trujillo. These two buildings were the work of the Moche culture, which dominated much of the north of the present day Peru between the 1st and 8th centuries AD. Between the two structures stood a city, perhaps one of the culture's most important.



A SACRED PLACE

Experts currently believe that the Huaca de la Luna was one of the Moche's principal ritual centers south of the Zaña River. The structure, surrounded by high adobe walls and comprising three platforms and three plazas, was the scene of important human sacrifices, with the remains later buried in the temple itself.



AN UNSETTLING PRESENCE

The most representative figure found amongst the various chambers of the Huaca de la Luna is that of Aiapaec, better known as *el Degollador* (the Decapitator). Depicted with a mixture of human and feline features, it is believed that he was one of the Moche's principal deities. They associated him as much with creation and fertility as with death and destruction.



Even before Inca control extended across the north of Peru, the region was home to great and powerful civilizations. Today, we gain insight into how complex their societies and cultures were thanks to their monumental constructions, many of which served as the final resting place for their leaders.



MONUMENTAL MYSTERY

We know little for certain about the Huaca del Sol, which rises up some 500 meters from the Huaca de la Luna. Its construction is later, and corresponds to the final chapters in the history of Moche power in the region prior to its collapse between AD 750 and 800.

1. Frieze in the Huaca de la Luna © Daniel Silva / PROMPERÚ
2. Moche iconography © Renzo Tasso / PROMPERÚ
3. Aiapaec, "The Decapitator" © Alex Bryce / PROMPERÚ
4. Monumental details in the huaca. © Luis Yupanqui / PROMPERÚ



THREE HUACAS FOR A VALLEY

El Brujo is one of the most important and striking archaeological complexes in the department of La Libertad. Located in the valley of the Chicama River about sixty kilometers north of Trujillo, it consists of three huacas, each reflecting a different period of occupation in the area: Huaca Prieta, Huaca Cao Viejo, and Huaca Partida.



THE MOCHE NOBLEWOMAN

In 2006 the remains of a woman, now known as the Lady of Cao, were found in one of the chambers of the Huaca Cao Viejo. The location and characteristics of her burial have led archaeologists to surmise that she ruled the Moche in the 4th century AD. Never before had there been news of a woman who exercised such power over the region's pre-Columbian cultures.

- 5. **El Brujo Archaeological Complex** © Luis Yupanqui / PROMPERÚ
- 6. **The Lady of Cao mummy** © Yayo López / PROMPERÚ
- 7. **The Museum of Cao** © Alex Bryce / PROMPERÚ
- 8. **The Chan Chan citadel** © Casa Andina
- 9. **An ornamental motif on an adobe wall** © Luis Yupanqui / PROMPERÚ
- 10. **Caballitos de totora in Trujillo** © Alex Bryce / PROMPERÚ



A MUSEUM FOR THE LADY OF CAO

The Lady of Cao currently is housed in the Museum of Cao, located at the entrance of the El Brujo Archaeological Complex. Visitors can see the mummified remains of the Moche ruler in the state in which they were originally found, including the ornaments, necklaces, and diadems of gold, silver and copper with which she was buried.



ADOBE METROPOLIS

Chan Chan is located halfway between the city of Trujillo and the resort of Huanchaco. Covering an area of more than 20 square kilometers, it is considered the largest adobe city in the Americas. The citadel was constructed by the Chimú culture, which developed on the northern coast of present day Peru between the 12th and 15th centuries AD.



CULT OF THE SEA

The different motifs which decorate the walls of Chan Chan reveal that its inhabitants paid tribute to the sea. The figures include representations of fish and seabirds, and a mammal that appears to be an otter. There are also many geometric designs that resemble fishing nets.



LOVE OF THE WAVES

The Chimú subsisted in part from fishing. They launched their nets after setting out to sea aboard small boats similar to the caballitos de totora we see today, a type of raft which many of the region's fishermen still use.



CHICLAYO, LAMBAYEQUE

LUXURY TOMB

The Sipán archaeological complex, also known as Huaca Rajada, is located 35 kilometers southeast of the city of Chiclayo. It was here that in 1987 the archaeologist Walter Alva discovered the tomb of the Lord of Sipán, an important Moche governor who was buried along with an entourage of people and animals, and a large number of offerings, ornaments, and clothing.



ROYAL EXHIBITION

The remains of the Lord of Sipán and the other contents of his tomb are currently exhibited in the Royal Tombs of Sipán Museum, located a little over 11 kilometers north of Chiclayo in the city of Lambayeque. Opened in 2002, this museum also contains a huge collection of pieces from the Moche culture.



PYRAMID BUILDERS

Located near the eponymous town 33 kilometers northeast of Chiclayo, the Túcume archaeological complex was at one time a principal city of the Sicán culture. Although they have been eroded by rain and wind, the monumental architecture is distinguished by the presence of tall stepped pyramids.



PYRAMIDS IN THE FOREST

The Pómac Forest Historic Sanctuary is located in the district of Pítipo. This Protected Natural Area not only contains the world's largest forest of carob trees but also a huge archaeological complex made up of more than thirty pyramids from the Sicán culture. The most well known are the huacas El Oro (gold) and Las Ventanas (the windows).



METALLURGY MASTERS

The craftsmen of Sicán shone through the skill with which they worked metal. They commanded a diverse set of technologies, among them large scale casting and the use of diverse copper alloys. The Tumi de Oro is one of the society's most famous pieces of goldsmithing and remains a symbol of the region's pre-Columbian cultures.

11. **The Lord of Sipán and his entourage**
© Renzo Tasso / PROMPERÚ
12. **The tomb of the Lord of Sipán**
© Christopher Plunkett / PROMPERÚ
13. **Túcume Archaeological Complex**
© Renzo Tasso / PROMPERÚ
14. **Huaca El Oro**
© Fernando Criollo / PROMPERÚ
15. **Tumi** © Gihan Tubbeh / PROMPERÚ
16. **Kuélap cable car**
© Daniel Silva / PROMPERÚ
17. **Kuelap Monumental Archaeological Zone**
© Daniel Silva / PROMPERÚ
18. **Leymebamba Museum**
© Omar Carbajal / PROMPERÚ
19. **Kuélap melts into the landscape of the mountain**
© Luis Gamero / PROMPERÚ

CHACHAPOYAS, AMAZONAS

THE KINGDOM OF THE CHACHAPOYAS

Kuélap is the most famous construction that members of the Chachapoyas culture built during their era. The citadel is located in the brow of the jungle in the department of Amazonas. It is reached from Nuevo Tingo—located approximately 50 kilometers south of the city of Chachapoyas—from where a cable car takes visitors up to the archaeological site.



A QUESTION OF DESIGN

Although its main structure is 680 meters long and 150 meters wide, the full Kuélap Monumental Archaeological Zone covers an area of some seven hectares. Because it is a walled city, Kuélap is often compared to a fortress; however, it is possible that the main functions were religious and administrative.

RITUAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Within Kuélap itself are three main buildings, whose characteristics seem linked to religious services: the Main Temple, a circular elevated platform with a diameter of thirteen meters and a height of five meters; the Circular Platform located on the southern wall; and the Tower, located towards the northern end of the complex.



RESTING OVER THE ABYSS

One of the most striking characteristics of the Chachapoyas culture is the treatment it gave to the dead. Instead of burial, deceased people were placed in personal sarcophagi or communal mausoleums located on the vertical slopes of the mountains. The Karajia sarcophagi and the Revash mausoleums are examples of this.



MUMMY TREASURE

The town of Leymebamba is a point of departure to access the Lagoon of the Condors, hidden between the mountains that divide the departments of Amazonas and San Martín. More than two hundred mummies of the Chachapoyas culture have been found on the slopes that surround the waters of the lagoon. These are on exhibition in the Leymebamba site museum.





Facade of the new temple of the
Chavín de Huántar Archaeological Complex.
© Juan Puelles / PROMPERÚ

The cities of **Caral** and **Chavín de Huántar** are amongst the oldest on the continent. Each was an important political and religious center. Although they passed into history, they also left an indelible mark that indicated the later development of the region's cultures.

The dawn of the cities: rite, desert, and stone



REPORT

By Santiago Bullard
Journalist

It all started between the desert and the mountains. More than five thousand years ago the magnificent city of Caral already stood amongst the rocky outcrops that surround the Supe Valley in the north of the present day department of Lima. Some 1500 years later the Chavín culture would begin to spread across the mountains and, at an elevation over 3000 meters in the Cordillera Blanca (present day Áncash), hide the most mysterious of its chambers.

At first glance Caral and Chavín de Huántar could not be more different. Not only are they separated in time by more than a millennium; they are also distinguished by the scenery that surrounds each, the materials with which each was built, and the culture that their respective inhabitants observed. But they have one thing in common:

their monumental character. In other words, it was through these cities that in this part of the world complex civilizations were founded.

The root in the desert

According to calculations by archaeologists, the construction of Caral began in the year 3000 BC. This makes it the oldest city in the Americas. The presence of monumental buildings, such as pyramids, circular plazas, and furnaces for offerings, are a reflection of a society organized around a common cult and a well-defined hierarchy.

This is the position taken by archaeologist Ruth Shady, who began her research at Caral in the 1990s. She has written "the architectural work in the city and the countryside, and the associated materials,



COLUMN

NATALIA HARO

CHAVÍN NATIONAL MUSEUM
DIRECTOR



Chavín de Huántar is a symbol. Beyond its monumental character, the site reflects the fundamental way in which the civilizations in this part of the continent depended on syncretism and interculturality. The site attracted representatives of peoples and cultures from afar to participate in exchanges and experiences that were, to borrow a term, "mystical". That is why we are able to observe the influence of Chavín in the artistic traditions that developed in other regions. It was the epicenter for dissemination of certain world views.

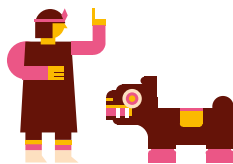
But all this is only a part of what we want to transmit through the Chavín National Museum. The team effort has been arduous and many actors have participated, including members of the local community. The Japanese government also provided support to construct the museum. This all relates to a growing interest from the public because of the recent archaeological discoveries and the investigations being undertaken in the monumental complex. And we are renewing the museographic proposal, inaugurated a year ago, to make it more dynamic. The museum is already ten years old, yet we feel our research has just begun.



1. Walls at Chavín de Huántar © Daniel Silva / PROMPERÚ
2. Nailed heads in the Chavín National Museum © Juan Puelles / PROMPERÚ

INFORMATION

CHAVÍN DE HUÁNTAR



Subterranean rumble

Underground channels have been discovered which, in their era, circulated water beneath Chavín de Huántar. According to archaeologists, the objective was essentially ritualistic, since the noise produced by the water evoked the growl of a feline, like the puma or the jaguar.



National Chavín Museum

Visitors to the museum must travel to the town of Chavín de Huántar, in the province of Huari, department of Áncash. The doors are open Tuesday to Sunday, from 9am until 5pm. Celebrations will occur during 2019 to mark the 100th anniversary of the start of Julio C. Tello's investigations.



Rites

National archaeologists, such as Guillermo Lumbreras, have concluded that some of the rituals practiced at Chavín de Huántar included cannibalism and used hallucinogenic plants. The function of these rites was both religious and political.

provide evidence of a complex social organization in three hierarchical strata.” These strata would have been the general population, the specialists, and the religious authorities.

Stone and shadows

The presence of Chavín de Huántar continues to evoke an enigma. Although nearly a century has elapsed since Julio C. Tello began the first investigations at this archaeological complex in 1919, the mysteries continue to accumulate along its corridors. Today we know that this enclosure served as the center of power for the Chavín culture. We also know that representatives of very remote populations traveled here to participate in religious rites and initiations. But many other secrets remain unlocked by time, protected by the silence of the nailed heads, the only eyewitnesses to that long-ago era.

Nevertheless, some archaeologists—such as Guillermo Lumbreras, John Rick, and Richard Burger—have managed to see past the shadows and shed some light on the riddles these buildings contain. Many of the results of their research at the archaeological complex are on display in the Chavín National Museum, located on the outskirts of the neighboring town of Chavín de Huántar. Its exhibits include a wide variety of ceramic vessels, nailed

heads, musical instruments made with sea shells called *pututos*, and a stone replica of the Lanzón de Chavín.

According to Juan Pablo Villanueva, Director of the museum’s International Center for Research, Conservation and Restoration, Chavín de Huántar’s monumental architecture reflects a complex social phenomenon: “It is the product of the constant planning and development of a systematic knowledge of nature, together with a complex religion and ritual, which in turn permitted the empowerment and promotion of a priestly elite.”

Caral and Chavín de Huántar have both survived a long historical process. Today, their presence remains a testimony to how the first great civilizations in this part of the world took shape. Many secrets still await discovery beneath the sand and amongst the stones.

3. Sunset over the Caral Archaeological Complex

© Michael Tweddle / PROMPERÚ



3.

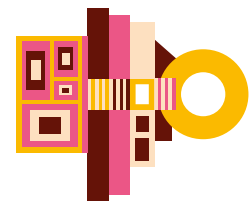
PERSPECTIVES

RUTH SHADY
ARCHAEOLOGIST

At the start of my work as an archaeologist on the north coast my focus was the valley of Supe. We knew monumental sites existed there; although at that time their occupation was thought to be related to Chavín. Following three years of research, we had obtained the necessary evidence to announce to the world the antiquity and the meaning of the Sacred City of Caral. The first civilization in all the Americas, it was formed over the central Andean area in complete isolation. But its later influence makes it a “matrix” culture, something we can identify from cultural elements which were preserved and adapted in all the Andean societies that followed 4400 years later: musical development, agriculture on prepared terraces, social organization with functions defined by gender, and the cohesive role of ideology. Today, we can use what we know about Caral’s social history to strengthen intercultural relations. And we can draw on this archaeological heritage to inspire our creativity.

INFORMATION

PIONEERING CIVILIZATION



Caral Archaeological Complex

Caral has an area of more than 60 hectares, and is divided into two zones. One houses the city’s largest building, and the other, around the periphery, consists of sets of smaller houses.

The meeting of two worlds

REPORT

By Gloria Ziegler
Journalist



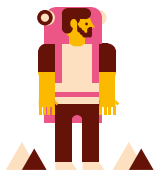
Cajamarca is one of the principal population centers in the country's northern highlands. Five centuries ago it witnessed an event that was to mark the history of the entire continent: the encounter between Atahualpa and Francisco Pizarro.

"Incomparable, solemn, grand, and unique": it was with these words published in 1918 that the writer Abraham Valdelomar sought to do justice to Cajamarca's beauty. Since then one hundred years have passed, and although the city has grown so far across the wide plain on which it sits that some of its streets now climb the face of the surrounding hills, it still retains the personality, as monumental as it is simple, that so distinguishes it.



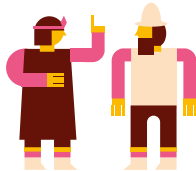
INFORMATION

CAJAMARCA BY FOUR



Location

Cajamarca is located in the northern highlands of Peru, at an elevation of 2750 meters above sea level. Its climate is mild and dry most of the year, although the temperature drops during the night.



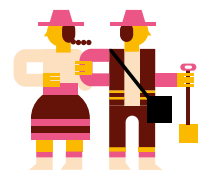
The Ransom Room

This attraction is located in the city's historic center. It measures almost 12 meters long by 7.50 meters wide. Although the roof has been reconstructed, its volcanic stone walls are of Inca origin.



Carnivals

Taking place in the months of February and March, Cajamarca's Carnival is the city's most important festivity. The celebrations can last up to ten days. They range from traditional dances to contests between *comparsas* (local performance troupes).



Modernity in the making

The winds of modernity have been blowing strongly in Cajamarca since the 19th century. The city is the birthplace of important intellectuals, writers, and artists, such as the novelist Amanda Puga, and the philosopher Mariano Ibérico.



2.

Cajamarca, also known as “Flor del Cumbe” (Flower of the Cumbemayo Mountain), was declared Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Americas by the Organization of American States in 1986. As construction of many of its buildings began in the 17th and 18th centuries, a short walk through the city’s historic center is enough to admire the richness of its colonial legacy. Examples include the Cathedral of Santa Catalina, the monumental complex of Bethlehem, and the churches of San Francisco and La Recoleta. To cap it off, Cajamarca was the scene of one of the most important events in the history of the continent: the meeting between Atahualpa and Francisco Pizarro.

The last Inca’s encounter with the Spanish *conquistador* occurred at the end of 1532, and led to his capture and imprisonment in a building known as the Ransom Room. It owes its name to

the story that, in exchange for his freedom, the Inca offered to fill the room to the height of his raised hand twice with silver and once with gold. The room is located near the present day main square and its four volcanic stone walls are the last vestiges of Inca architecture that remain in the city.

However, it is not only the richness of its historic legacy draws people to Cajamarca. In recent years the region has gained fame for the beauty of its natural landscapes. Imposing destinations, such as the Cumbemayo stone forest or the Llacanora waterfalls, are easily accessible from the city. And, of course, there is its gastronomy, which includes various traditional dishes and the production of almost proverbial quality cheeses. Various elements come together on the streets of Cajamarca on a daily basis and coexist there, just as the past coexists with the present.

1. Cajamarca Cathedral

© Inés Menacho / PROMPERÚ

2. Cumbemayo

© Christopher Plunkett / PROMPERÚ

NATURAL GROWTH

At first glance, the image might suggest a postcard of the Alps: green pastures surrounded by pine forests that lose themselves somewhere between the foot of the mountains and the horizon, all under a vibrant blue sky. But this landscape is found in the Andes of northern Peru, only thirty kilometers from the city of Cajamarca. The name of the locality is Granja Porcón (Porcón Farm), the scene of one of the largest community projects in the region.

Here, in 1975, through a diverse set of activities aimed at sustainable development, a new story began to be written. Following the Agrarian Reform, the land that makes up Granja Porcón passed into the hands of a cooperative known as Atahualpa Jerusalén. Led by a peasant named Alejandro Quispe Chilón, the group of sixty founding members took an important initial decision: they would plant pine trees in order to add an ambitious forestry project to the existing cultivation and livestock activities. These plantations today cover an area of more than ten thousand hectares.

This first step set in motion a process that would, over time, deliver a complex sustainable development project. Pedro Chilón, a current member of the cooperative, reports that it has invested in other new activities as well, such as beekeeping and fish farming. "We also replaced potato crops with raspberries and cranberries, which we use to make jams and marmalades, although we keep vegetable gardens for domestic consumption."

Since 1998 Granja Porcón has also provided tourism services, including lodging, restaurants, nature activities, and community and experiential rural tourism programs. "It is important that tourism is sustainable," says Chilón. "Not only does this generate economic development and improvements in services for the community, but it also allows greater care for the environment."



Under the management of Alejandro Quispe Chilón, the community decided to add an ambitious forestry project: to plant pines at Granja Porcón.

3. Pine forest

© Marco Garro / PROMPERÚ

4. Peacock

© Inés Menacho / PROMPERÚ

5. Livestock is one of Cajamarca's pillars

© Josip Curich / PROMPERÚ



The promise of the Amazon

A luxury cruiser navigates Peruvian Amazon delving into the deepest mysteries of one of the most fragile ecosystems on Earth.



FEATURE

By Kareena Gianani

Senior associate editor at National Geographic Traveler India

Nights on the Marañón River have a dark, viscous texture. They turn ficus trees along banks into looming Dementors. Like echo chambers, they magnify wet slithers on forest floors, turning up the shrieks of bulldog bats that fish in this part of the world.

We streak across waters that are eerie black mirrors due to the tannin released by the vegetation. Our wooden skiff stops abruptly. Something hisses in my left ear.

"Today is your birthday."

The portly figure of Juan Tejada rises at the prow, bending to part the foliage of the jungle beyond. "Today is your birthday, and the Amazon is your present," whispers our naturalist. Anaconda? Tarantula? Or a hungry jaguar?"

Earlier this morning, as my plane flew into the port city of Iquitos in northeastern Peru, I saw something I will never likely forget. All earth was a tightly bunched, bottle-green rainforest. A muddy river snaked through it in a perfect sine wave, as if a rhythmic gymnast had twirled her ribbon across. I was in the Amazon, the world's largest river by volume, and was looking down at a fraction of its seven million square kilometres of rainforest. Two decades ago, I had crammed its mindboggling proportions for a school exam: "The Amazon is the planet's largest tropical rainforest and is almost twice the size of India. It spans nine countries –Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana." The scale of this place is larger than what a pigtailed schoolgirl could imagine.



Juan revels in the Amazon, with an ease that comes from having grown up here and swimming with endangered pink dolphins as a boy. He leans deeper into the ferns—he has spotted two glinting red dots—and returns with a foot-long baby black caiman. The species is the largest and one of the deadliest crocodiles in the world; and its bitter-gourd-like texture makes me squirm. Juan carefully puts it back. Then Marcos, the helmsman, switches off the skiff's engine and light for a few minutes. I listen to the mixtape of the jungle: hoots, yips and trills meshing with murmurs and sounds of fish cutting water. "Y'all listenin' to the soundtrack of some of the 1,400 endemic bird species of the Amazon, my friends," says Juan. "These waters hold the deadly paiche fish, a carnivore with teeth on the roof of its mouth and on the tongue. There are electric fish too, that emit 600 volts to stun their prey."

We return to our vessel, the Zafiro, which reminds me of the other extreme of my Amazonian adventure: luxury. Lights blink from its nineteen cabins, bar, restaurant and deck. Inside, 19 crew members—most of them born in Amazonian villages—



2.

work tirelessly to give me and 14 others an intimate glimpse of a largely secret, fragile ecosystem that not even many Peruvians have explored. Starting from the port town of Nauta, which lies 100 kilometres from Iquitos, over four nights my portable home will cover the depths of tropical forests enclosed by two tributaries of the Amazon, Marañón and Ucayali. The area they enclose is part of the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, Peru's second largest rainforest, which is the size of Belgium.

There's no mobile network on the ship. So, the first thing I do every morning is push the curtains away from the floor-to-ceiling window in my room. The wallpaper changes every day; I could wake up to swaying palms, or houses built on stilts. One morning, bleary-eyed from sleep, I spot three grey dolphins gambolling in the river. I wait, and two more join in, oblivious to the manic grin of a woman in a bathrobe with toothpaste foaming in her mouth.



1. A boat trip along the Amazon River © Carlos Ibarra / PROMPERÚ

2. Caimán Negro (*Melanosuchus niger*, Black Caiman) © Ernesto Benavides / PROMPERÚ

3. Red bald-headed uakari monkey © Gihan Tubbeh / PROMPERÚ

4. Blue-and-yellow macaw (*Ara ararauna*) in an animal shelter, Loreto © Alvaro García / PROMPERÚ



3.

"Don't lean on that!"

I leap away from an innocent-looking cedar.

Juan points to its base; it is teeming with ants the size of my little finger. "Bullet ants, the deadliest of all. Their sting hurts for a full day. I was once paralysed for six hours."

We plod deep into the Fundo Casual jungle trail in terra firma rainforest, one that's on a higher ground and never gets flooded. This part of the jungle is unbelievably dense—only three per cent of the sunlight reaches the ground. I hear growls of thunder, and rain, yet only the faintest drizzle reaches the soggy, salad-like ground. We cross a



4.



series of high, wobbly bridges that put us face to face with the lush forest canopy. Huge, twisty liana vines coil around other trees to reach the top. “The presence of lianas is proof that you’re in a primary forest; one that has never been logged,” Juan tells me. I silently repeat this trivia so I never forget— I am in one of the world’s primeval places, one that has existed continuously for 20 centuries.

You’re in the Earth’s green pharmacy

For our companion Jorge, the *selva* (tropical jungle) is an extension of his wiry body and senses. A tracker extraordinaire, he darts into gaps between trees I’d never dare enter. One time, he emerges with—well, just a palm leaf.

But Juan is visibly excited. “Poison dart frog,” he says, and I notice an electric orange-and-black frog smaller than my thumbnail. Seeing a lady baby-talk to it, Juan chuckles, “German scientists are studying its toxin to make a substance 30 times stronger than morphine.” Over the next 20 minutes, Jorge returns with a hairy but otherwise cute tarantula, and leads us to a 25-foot anaconda napping after a heavy meal. “You’re in Earth’s green pharmacy,” I hear Juan say, as we photograph the anaconda from a foot away. Cornell University, he

adds, set up a research lab here in 2001 and is studying bullet ants to treat epilepsy. Amazonian shamans have long known that the cat’s claw herb helps with diabetes, prostrate and kidney ailments. Only a small percentage of the Amazon’s 20,000 species of medicinal plants are known to Western medicine. The rainforest, says Juan, might hold a cure for cancer.

The clouds look like whipped cream

Dinner on the ship is a tasting platter of Peru’s bounty; it comes from the rivers and jungles I visit by day, and from the fertile Andes. There’s wild cucumber stuffed with the purée of *cocona*, a tart tropical fruit. I grab packets of *juane* like they are candy, relishing the rice and chicken steamed in parcels of *bijao* leaves. There’s huge *Doncella* catfish cooked with local chorizo sauce. I scoop ladles of *locro*, a thick hearty stew of pumpkin, cheese, beans, corn and mint that makes you miss your mother for no reason. A lady in the group pairs every dish with *camu camu* juice, a delicious Amazonian berry packed with Vitamin C. I on the other hand learn to never refuse a second helping of the *aji de gallina*—a creamy chicken dish with yellow pepper, egg, and crackers, garnished with black olives.



For hours, we enter the high-definition, Avatar-meets-Jurassic Park kind of rainforest that keeps the strangest creatures for company.

5. The sinuous figures of the Amazon River from above.

© César Vega / PROMPERÚ

6. Hikes through the Loreto forest.

© Alex Bryce / PROMPERÚ

7. The luxury cruises that sail the Amazonian rivers have kayaks for exploring the riverbanks

© Carlos Ibarra / PROMPERÚ

8. A boat expedition near the confluence of the Ucayali and Marañon rivers at the source of the Amazon

© Renzo Tasso / PROMPERÚ

One evening, before dinner, the ship's manager Angela Rodriguez joins me on my simple quotidian ritual on the deck: to watch the *Zafiro* glide past creeks and lagoons. The clouds look like whisked cream floating on pink skies. At twilight, lights begin to flicker in the homes along the banks. Angela tells me she was born in one such village along the Ucayali. And her only dream was to build a life around the Amazon, not escape it. Angela's mother asked her "not to bother about finding a husband," and moved to Iquitos so Angela could study English. They sold cookies and ice cream in the morning, and cakes in the evening. "But we were happy, because Mama sang all the time!" laughs Angela. I see how she brings a proud, Amazonian sensibility aboard the boat. That's why she works with women from 20 riverine communities who make jewellery and handicrafts, like the gorgeous, frog-shaped napkin-holder from a table, woven from fibres of the porcupine palm I saw one morning on the table. Angela is taking a diploma on Amazonian communities to understand her own region better. "You'll get a real idea of the Amazon only if locals feel that they have a stake in the tourism," she says.

The Infinity Rooms of Yayoi Kusama

Every day at dawn, as we step into our 12-seater wooden skiff, I take the liberty of believing six impossible things before breakfast. "This isn't Africa" I remember Juan telling me, so we are never promised anything. But one excursion into the rainforest is enough for me to know one thing—

"Amigos, here's another day of many firsts! Vámonos."

For hours, we enter the high-definition, rainforest that keeps the strangest creatures for company. The bird, red-capped manakin, called the Michael Jackson of the Amazon, moonwalks on a branch to woo the ladies. The wattled jacana or the 'Jesus bird' walks on water. Something sounds like gigantic bubbles bursting? Must be the bird colony of russet-backed oropendola. Juan is a blur, pointing in all directions at once, shooting off names faster than we can turn. On one walk, someone swears they saw pieces of leaves "walking" on their own. "Leaf-cutter ants," replies Juan, "Crunchy things. And tasty!" Sure enough I spot an army scurrying with leaf fragments in their "jaws." Our senses can detect just 20 per cent of the sounds and movements here.

Next, Juan takes us in search of the river's darling—the Amazon dolphins, who are bubblegum-pink with a bulbous forehead. They have a pretty rad life story: Largest of the four river dolphin species, pink dolphin have evolved over 15 million years to adapt to the unique conditions of the Amazon. Their thin, long beaks help them fish amid submerged branches, and on a good day score some shrimp and crayfish. Marcos stops and starts the skiff's engine. Soon we whoop as one, two, then three dolphins blow and disappear into the water. If we ride towards them, they friskily emerge behind us, as if playing a game. "Every time I see them feels like my first time," grins Juan.

Later, Juan and I canoe on the river in silence. He allows me to cut through the water lettuce and glimpse the jungle within. It feels untouched since centuries, and resembles Yayoi Kusama's "Infinity Rooms" with its burst of light and green colour. I itch to step inside; Juan jokes about the chullachaqui, legendary limping gnome who tricks people into the forest until they are lost. I ask him what's left on his Amazonian wish list after 30 years of sightings. "Oh, lots," he exclaims. He has never seen a manatee in the wild, the pillow-like aquatic sea cow,

PERSPECTIVES

CHRISTIAN BENDAYÁN

IQUITOS ARTIST



Since the origins of this curious city, whose founding, in truth, has not been dated, the story of the foreigner who arrives and falls in love with these captivating lands has repeated time and again. Iquitos is the fragrance of Alain Delon, the port of departure for Jules Verne's *jangada* raft on his trip of 800 leagues along the Amazon, and is the city which heard the cries of Klaus Kinski from the bell tower of its cathedral vowing to build an opera house.

Seduced in the same way by its mysterious beauty, painting too arrived in Iquitos. First in the form of an explorer, a zoologist and a botanist, to later become a genuine artistic expression. It was Otto Michael, a German entomologist born in 1859, who began the tradition of modern Amazonian painting. He settled in Iquitos in 1894 when the city was beginning to become a giant emporium thanks to the rubber trade. His fascination led him to portray its metamorphoses in different watercolors. Of that series of paintings, only some have survived. For the others, we have printed records and reproductions in magazines and postcards. For decades, Michael depicted through his snapshots of the Amazon River not just the development of the city's splendor, but also its contradictions: the esplanade's luxurious houses contrast with the small huts located at the edge of the picture, and the powerful merchant ships contrast with the small *peque peque* boats usually located in the foreground. His persistence in continuing to represent this same landscape allows us to observe the port of Iquitos as it grows.

By viewing his paintings, we can navigate the region's history and explore the Iquitos esplanade replete with buildings that boast a European architecture. But we can also travel to the origins of *iquiteña* painting, which has long highlighted the Amazon and its culture. Over recent years, Amazon art has represented Peru at important art biennials and international fairs. Even with all it has achieved, the artists continue to drink from the Amazon and from the beauty of that city that traps all who are fortunate enough to fall in love with her.



Our guide lets me glimpse the jungle within. It feels untouched since centuries, and resembles Yayoi Kusama's "Infinity Rooms" with its burst of light and green colour.

Too many creatures, he worries, are disappearing because the Amazon is threatened by hunting and logging.

"I visited the Amazonian tributary Napo in 1988, and spotted a prehistoric bird, hoatzin. On a recent trip there, nothing. All gone. Maybe forever."

Some things, however, aren't lost yet.

One afternoon, Juan takes us to meet Carola, the local shaman, to give us an understanding of the life of *riberieños* (riverine communities). Allopathy is not common here, and there aren't too many shamans around anymore. Carola alone treats locals from nine communities. Dressed in an embroidered shirt and skirt—traditional attire of the Cucama tribe—Carola shows us her stock of medicinal herbs, and the famed ayahuasca vine that she brews to make a hallucinogenic drink. The ayahuasca is a purgative, and cleanses a shaman physically and spiritually. "She drinks it to diagnose serious ailments, and it tells her where she'll find the medicinal plant in the forest that could heal her patient," translates Juan. Shamans aren't born, says Carola. Older shamans pick those with the right aura. Carola was chosen to be a shaman when she was 14, and underwent rigorous training for eight years. She still follows a vegetarian diet.



A boat trip along the Amazon
© Alex Bryce / PROMPERÚ

It is my last evening aboard the *Zafiro*. The crew, like on most days, puts up the kind of show that makes your heels sore and heart sing. I love how each crew member becomes a whole new person: Milton Gonzales, the shy server who chats with me over breakfast, croons Peruvian ballads, plays the guitar and the wind instrument *zampogna*—simultaneously. I cheer as hawk-eyed Juan makes his *cajon criollo* boom; he later tells me about the box-shaped percussion instrument’s 450-year-old Creole connection. However, no one astonishes as much as Angela, who dances like the river beneath her feet. Her liquid grace makes us want to clear the dance floor, and we often do, until she laughs and pulls us back in. The crescendo builds up, we cheer hoarsely, and the music stops only when Angela is out of breath.

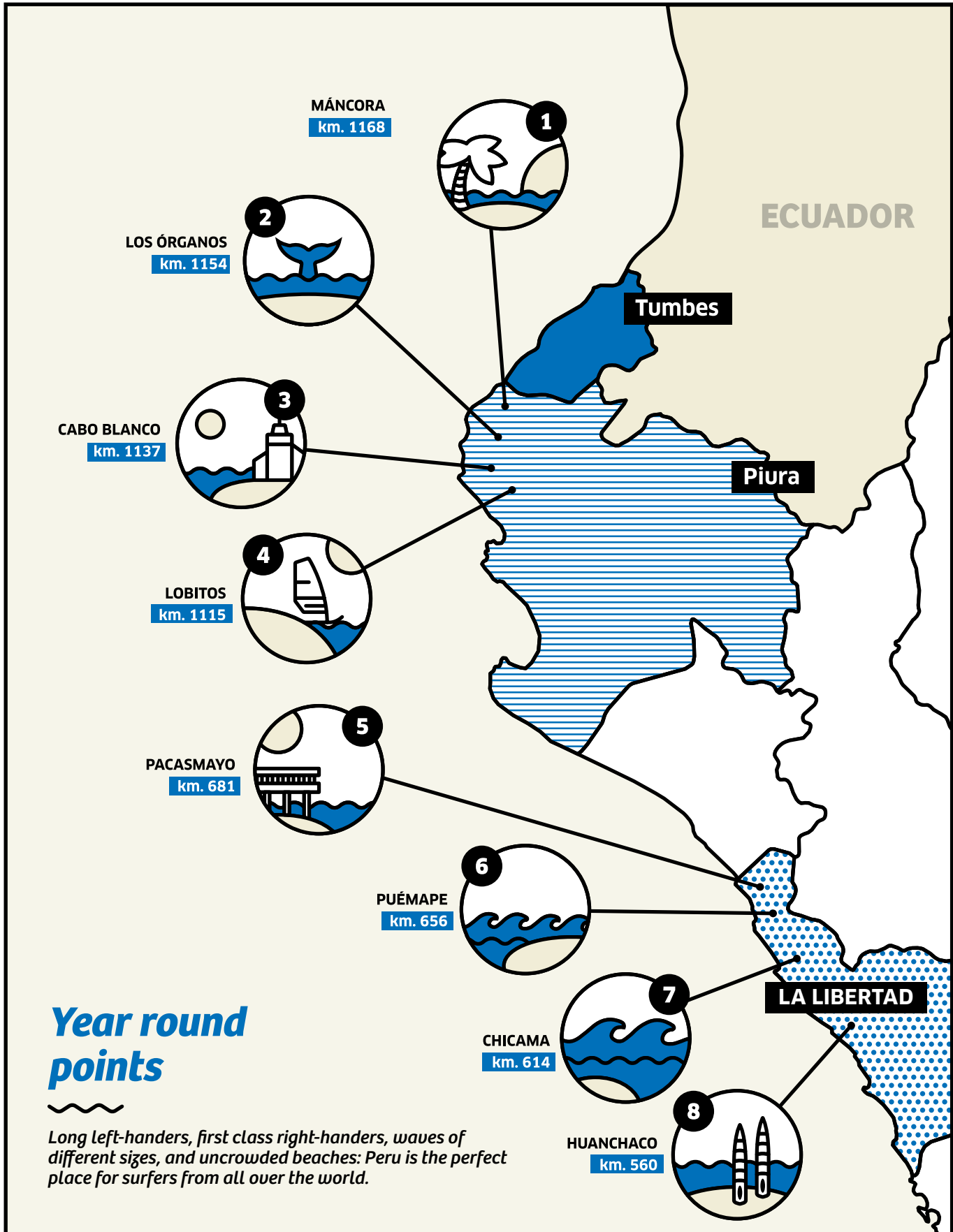
“Here,” she walks up to me later, pressing a pen drive with hundreds of photos of this trip into my palm. I thank her, and tell her something else too will connect me to the Amazon.

“I planted a mahogany in the reserve.”

Angela understands, and we walk to the deck one last time.

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Shamans aren’t born.
Older shamans pick those with the
right aura. Carola was chosen to
be a shaman when she was 14, and
underwent rigorous training for eight
years.





Chicama, La Libertad
© Daniel Silva / PROMPERÚ

- 1 MÁNCORA**
km. 1168

The ocean here is the perfect school for beginners and intermediates. Its orderly and consistent waves usually measure between a half and one meter, which also makes them ideal for kitesurfing.
- 2 LOS ÓRGANOS**
km. 1154

This cove has two swell zones. La Vuelta is the first. Safe only when there is a rise from the north, it is reserved for the most advanced practitioners. The other is located in front of Punta Veleros. Its calm waves make it ideal for learning the basics of surfing.
- 3 CABO BLANCO**
km. 1137

This beach has become a kind of mecca for many experienced surfers: both for its left-handed wave, which has a world-class fast tube; and for its position, located next to a rocky reef. It is divided into two areas, depending on the season: Panic Point in winter, and Cabo Blanco in summer.
- 4 LOBITOS**
km. 1115

Thanks to the presence of strong winds this beach is ideal for kitesurfers and windsurfers. But its four world-class waves do not disappoint lovers of traditional surfing.
- 5 PACASMAYO**
km. 681

The long and fluid waves here are perfect for surfing. They also suit kitesurfers and windsurfers when the wind is up.
- 6 PUÉMAPE**
km. 656

The left-handed wave here is the feature: divided into two sections it rises over 2.5 meters in height. The density of its swell is greater than the region's other beaches.
- 7 CHICAMA**
km. 614

This beach is famous for having the longest left-handed wave in the world, with a length of 2.5 kilometers. Surfers treasure it, especially those from overseas, who travel all the way to Chicama just to ride it.
- 8 HUANCHACO**
km. 560

Ideal for longboarding, Save the Waves declared Huanchaco a world surfing reserve in 2013. It was the first beach to obtain this recognition in Latin America, and the fifth in the world.

Why did I choose Cocachimba, there, so close to the Gocta falls?



FEATURE

By Jack Lo
Environmental journalist

A first hand account of how one of Peru's least known areas captured the spirit of a journalist who had crossed the country writing about its reserves and natural areas.



I first visited the department of Amazonas in 2007 whilst following a diverse group of birdwatchers. I was working for the tourism section of a local newspaper. The mission was to observe a group of people from around the world who had traveled from far and wide to tick birds off their list, such as the rare marvelous spatuletail hummingbird that seems to fly with two bumblebees behind the tail.

Five years later, I would return to visit the Utcubamba Valley, Kuélap, Karajía, La Jalca, Bongará, Leymebamba, Nogalcucho, San Pablo, and Cocachimba. The journey between the last two took me an entire day: eight hours walking from one community to the other. The route begins in San Pablo until you reach the first fall; it then descends by a steep path that leads to the second, before finally ending in



2.



3.

1. **GoctaLab.** Built by Sergio Abugattás with the help of teachers from the community using elements from the local area. Now Sergio has absorbed this knowledge and he wants to share it. © Conservamos por Naturaleza / SPDA
2. **Utcubamba.** The view of the valley from the Kuelap Monumental Archaeological Zone. © Yayo López / PROMPERÚ
3. **Welcome.** Groups come from all over the world. Every time I go to Cocachimba I meet at least one person who has fallen in love with the community and stayed longer. The energy of the place would capture anyone. © Renzo Tasso / PROMPERÚ

Cocachimba. People usually just enter via the latter, walk until the former, and then return.

But I wanted to live in the valley of Utcubamba, near Kuélap, beside the river and a path that leads to Cajamarca. In 2013 I began to go more frequently with the Conservamos por Naturaleza, an initiative of the Peruvian Society of Environmental Law that supports people who voluntarily decide to conserve their land. Little by little, I began to get to know this community of warm people who always welcomed me as if I were family. I was falling more and more in love with Amazonas. And I kept looking for my place beside the river. A group of friends began buying land in Cocachimba. But that did not interest me. And still I went, with even greater frequency. Other factors began to weigh. And slowly I began to change my mind.

It is a quiet community, home to just 150 people. The vast majority are very kind and hospitable. There are no motor vehicles. It is more secure. The view is impressive. I became hooked. And I bought a piece of land. I like to go by car. It takes two days. I break the trip in Pacasmayo. I love the route, which cuts through an incredible dry forest and then crosses the oven that is Bagua. Unlike now, at that time Chachapoyas airport was inoperative and the closest was in Tarapoto, six or seven hours away. The other alternative was to travel by plane to Chiclayo and then take a bus to Chachapoyas. Currently there are flights to Chachapoyas and Jaén, which is three hours by road from Cocachimba. These days Kuelap has a cable car and the road to Cajamarca is paved. In recent years the Network of Private Conservation Areas has also been created, and my favorite place is becoming increasingly active.



4.

“We have our interdisciplinary rural residential programs and what we want to do is share, discuss, and disseminate techniques and knowledge that might strengthen the implementation of new specific activities that lead to a new definition of development,” says Sergio Abugattás.

The foreigners arrive

Several people began to buy land in Cocachimba. This business brought money into a community that was barely surviving off tourism and some cropping. Using this new money, the people of Cocachimba bought cement and corrugated iron to build homes, leaving aside the traditional clay tiles and the walls of adobe or quincha. They opened new restaurants and lodging suitable for any budget. Now, the visitor can easily find camping areas. Increasing numbers of tourists arrive on holidays and weekends to see Peru's third highest waterfall (771 meters) and experience a part of the country where you only have to move a little to see an entirely different panorama, feel a different climate, and find yourself amongst a different set of species. I like Amazonas because it has so many climates.

Four years ago I met Monica and her Italian husband Francesco while they were pulling the

weeds from their plot. Now they have cabins equipped to receive visitors, with easy access and a nice view of the waterfall. My great friend Bruno Monteferrri and his wife Christel now have a stone house with clay roof tiles, which they have started to rent to friends who want to go to sleep facing one of the best views of the waterfall. My friend Sergio Abugattás has an artistic laboratory where he also grows several dozen species of fruits and vegetables. He welcomes groups in rooms that he built by himself. My friend Eusebio, a native cocachimbero, has expanded his Gallito de las Rocas lodge, perfect for those seeking a quiet rest without spending too much money. Gocta Natura is a well appointed and welcoming accommodation belonging to Mrs Rocio Florez. And for those who seek something more upmarket, the Gocta Lodge, recently extended, has a swimming pool that overlooks the waterfall.

Cocachimba is located in the Bongará valley,

INFORMATION

RECOMMENDATIONS OF A NEW COCACHIMBERO



Sergio Abugattás was one of the first outsiders to arrive in Cocachimba. It was just under ten years ago. He was looking for a place to settle so that he could build a creative laboratory that would provide a platform for students and artists to exchange and create. After much effort, and using bio-construction techniques and local elements, he built some well-designed bungalows. He patiently planted fruit trees, vegetables, and different plants that he brought from across the entire region. He now has one of the most diverse orchards in the area. He became a *comunero* (community member) and today is President of the Producers Association of Pitajaya and head of the Cocachimba peasant round (a community justice organ). He founded his GoctaLab here, where he receives people from all over the world who come to discover his workshops about art, ceramics, architecture, and regenerative agriculture. Many come for a week and end up staying several months. Sergio has explored a lot in Cocachimba and its surroundings. These are his recommendations: “I have four favorite places that are not normally visited. When visiting Gocta, enter via San Pablo and take the full route. It’s really good. So too is the Sungaya-Golondrina route, which shows you upper Cocachimba, where there is an impressive plateau with a really special view. If you have a little more time, going a little further you find the San Jerónimo sarcophagi and the Yumbilla waterfall. I recommend reaching the latter via El Porvenir, about fifteen minutes from Pedro Ruiz Gallo.”



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5.

- 4. Responsible.** The community wants to promote more responsible consumption and provides food that its members grow themselves without depending on imported products full of preservatives and chemicals.
© Conservamos por Naturaleza / SPDA
- 5. Walks.** The hike to the falls is suitable for everyone. However, to make the trip more enjoyable, the option of renting one of the community's horses is also available.
© Yayo López / PROMPERÚ

well-known because of the falls. Yumbilla, another of the world's highest falls (895 meters), is only about 45 minutes away by road. There you can practice canyoning, a sport that consists of rappelling down the waterfall. This entire area of Amazonas is very special. One moment fog is covering the view, and the next, the sun creates an explosion of colors before your very eyes.

It's been a while since I last visited my land. By now the brush will have taken over more and more of this small spot that has become, without my even realizing it, my favorite place.

PERSPECTIVES

LLUÍS DALMAU

CATALONIAN BUSINESSMAN, CREATOR OF PERÚ TRES NORTES AND OWNER OF GOCTA LODGE



I came to Peru for the first time in 1993, with nothing more than a backpack. I had already traveled around Colombia and Ecuador. Chachapoyas was going to be just one more city along the trail, except that the chance to work in an orchid nursery appeared and it became my first home in Peru. A year later I moved to Tarapoto to direct an international development cooperation project. In a setting with high rates of deforestation, we promoted sustainable agriculture with cacao, coffee, and heart of palm. But in December 2007, with Gocta beginning to appear on the country's tourist maps and a paved road now connecting Chachapoyas with the cities of San Martín as part of a nascent northern Amazon circuit, I once again traveled to Cocachimba. I was amazed: very few seemed to have realized the waterfall's potential. By a month after that visit I had already bought the land on which I would build the Gocta Lodge. The area already had electricity and better roads. Although construction took two more years, the hotel was finally opened in 2009—with just ten rooms. Later we added a swimming pool with an unmistakable view towards the Gocta falls. The architect had just one instruction: that all the rooms were to look out on the waterfall. That's its charm: it forms part of the natural landscape of Cocachimba.

Now, years after that first visit to Cocachimba, I view with optimism the region's growth. People have come to settle in the area from Lima and Europe. There is urban planning. Each valley has huge potential. In the short term we want to develop trekking in the falls, linking Yumbilla with Chinata and Gocta via their sources. I also love Leymebamba and Alto Utcubamba, an area with very high biodiversity and incomparable archaeological wealth. Valleys like Atuén and Chilchos are jewels still to be discovered in Chachapoyas and the north of Peru.

Near East

GUIDE

By Manolo Bonilla
Journalist

We could write pages about the orchids of San Martín alone. The region houses almost a thousand varieties of the exotic plant. But here we want to show another face: the one which draws on its natural wealth, its living cultures, its ancestral knowledge, and its pantry of ingredients to reinvent itself every day in the midst of the jungle and its forests, rivers, and waterfalls.



© Flor Ruiz / PROMPERÚ

Uncommon beauty. Yes it's true. Of the three thousand varieties of orchids recorded across the country, almost one thousand are found in the region of San Martín. Moyobamba is known as the city of orchids.

HUALLAGA

1

ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE

Two hours from Tarapoto, observing the course of the Huallaga river, near the Chazuta artisan's pier, Blanca Vela Reátegui smiles as she imagines the answers to two questions. First: "How nice would a boardwalk look, with a view of the river and benches, and stalls selling food and drinks made from local products?" Second: "How nice would honey of cacao on grilled pork taste?" Blanca is not just Chazuta's most well-known chef; she has traveled to Mistura five times as part of the regional selection of kitchens met by delegations of foreign chefs who want to discover ancestral farm cuisine. The type of cooking that Blanca rediscovers and prepares in her La Callana restaurant. She is also a strong woman. In the 1970s, long before people here talked about female empowerment, she was a school teacher and mayor. She grew up in Chazuta before it had roads or access to the outside world. Blanca went to a high school in Tarapoto; but to get there she would wake up at four in the morning to begin the walk of almost five hours. Today, that same distance can be covered in two hours by car

along a paved road. Seated at one of La Callana's tables, Blanca recalls those long days, which she describes as "an age of adventure." She started working as a teacher in Tununtunumba, a native community reached from Chazuta in ten minutes by canoe. Since retiring, Blanca has been able to spend more time in the kitchen. "I love promoting ancestral cuisine. It's amazing to think that my grandmother ate *majambo* and lived to be one hundred years old," says Blanca. For lunch that afternoon—using clay bowls made by potters from the Wasichay Cultural Center—the cook served a *gallina de chacra* chicken broth and two *boquichicos* (river fish), one smoked with saline flavors, and the other wrapped in a leaf and then grilled. It is now dusk, and Blanca Vela is again thinking about the future: in a few weeks a delegation of German researchers and gastronomy experts will visit. She has not yet decided if she will serve them *rumo api*, a cassava soup with a fish roe; or her Amazonian *fuchifú* soup, made with kion, farm chicken, *majambo* beans, and pak choi green leaves. Yes, just like her grandmother used to make.



© Alex Bryce / PROMPERÚ

CHAZUTA

2

CACAO STORIES

If you make it to Chazuta, you will find these people. Emma Larson is a German soil biologist who came to Tarapoto on a study exchange in 2001. Roberto Moreno is an agro-industrial engineer. He was born in Tarapoto but his parents and grandparents are from Chazuta. They met, fell in love, and got married. In 2004 they settled here in Chazuta, near the Huallaga River on the slopes of the Cordillera Azul (Blue Mountain Range). At that time the ceramics craftsmen of Wasichay were working, but things were already beginning to change. Travelers were coming on medicinal tourism in search of plants. While waiting for the cacao harvest (which can take from three to four years), Roberto and Emma decided to venture into beekeeping and make honey. By 2007 they were involved in reforestation, working with species such as bolaina and yarina. They called their business **Chacra Pasikiwi**, which is the name of the ravine that crosses their five hectare plot. Today they are investing in agrotourism. They run guided tours through their farm for visitors to discover the trees and the apiaries. And they have begun to diversify their product line, with

the honey and cacao brand **Abeja Azul**. To complete a trilogy of sweet products grown on his own farm, Roberto now has plans to sow vanilla.

Luz Jungbluth lived in Lima. She moved to Chazuta to be closer to the cacao of the Amazon. She is one of the founders of **Casa Qoya**, an enterprise that specializes in postharvest. Just a few meters from Roberto and Emma's farm, Luz receives and buys the cacao beans—at a fair price—from the area's farmers. She profiles the flavors during the drying and fermentation processes. She has also designed her own line of chocolate bars, called **Nina**.

After we have finished lunch at Blanca Vela's **La Callana**, a neighbor from Chazuta arrives. Her name is Erika Valderrama, but she is better known as the Dame of Cacao. In her project, the cacao derivatives are used to make pastries, such as honeys and jellies. She is now also working with cacao mucilage, an acidic yet sweet juice that Erika extracts from the pulp of the fruit before the beans are put to dry. This input is so versatile that it can be used in a simple frappe, or in haute cuisine.

TARAPOTO

3

NATURAL REFUGES

It is the richness of the landscape that drives the placement of accommodation options in San Martín: close to the river, facing a mountain, beside a lagoon, or beneath the protection of the *cordillera* (range). The **La Sonada eco-park** is an example. Some years ago, the 150 hectares it occupies on the shores of the Blue Lagoon (a twenty minute boat ride from the town of El Sauce) were bought by Michele Lettersten and Luis Calegari. In 2017 they opened an ecofriendly leisure space, which now features an orchid garden, a butterfly garden, and a chocolate workshop. They rent jet skis and offer activities such as canoeing and horseback riding. As Calegari practices holistic medicine, he also conducts research at the center and has designed health products such as oils from *sacha inchi* (a kind of Amazonian peanut), relaxing balms, and ointments made from natural ingredients.

Pumarinri Lodge, to the side of the road between Tarapoto and Chazuta, is another successful San Martín venture. Located at a natural junction where the Cordillera Azul and the Cordillera Escalera meet, the lodge takes its

name from the view that every window in the building affords of a set of mountains beyond the river that resemble the ears of a puma. Here, the natural landscape dominates all other environments. And carefully designed paths from the hotel to the surrounding areas enable guests to quickly discover the diverse range of wildlife species. One of the trails leads to a natural pool that hides amongst the trees and is suitable for swimming. Together with the Huallaga, the Cumbaza river defines the geography of San Martín. Half an hour from Tarapoto, a visitor climbing towards San Roque de Cumbaza will find **Canto del Río Lodge**, another hotel which has direct access to the river. Small in scale, the accommodation consists of modest and comfortable bungalows built with raw materials from the area (San Antonio de Cumbaza) which adapt the natural environment rather than distort it. These are just three of many private enterprises whose owners understand that nature is their best asset.



© Karina Mendoza / PROMPERÚ



© Perú Tres Nortes

CUMBAZA

4

A SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION

The road from Tarapoto winds up to the mountain to San Roque de Cumbaza, a destination that has exploited both its proximity to the city and its rich landscapes to become a place of escape and rest. "Here you can see the forest a little better," says Claudia Olivares, founder of the **Chirapa Manta** ecolodge, a sustainable life project that she designed with her photographer husband three years ago after leaving Lima. They built a small ecolodge as a space to showcase local building techniques and forms using mud, wood, and cane. "We are surrounded by tropical forest and we have incredible views of the Cumbaza river," says Olivares. Today, aligned with natural wellness, they offer retreats and overnight stays for groups interested in yoga and healthy nutrition. In recent years, San Roque de Cumbaza has become a place where people of different origins settle and launch ventures that are coordinated along a new tourism circuit designed to attract new travelers. Other players have appeared on the stage, such as **Sachaqa**, a center for art and residencies.

The venture encourages meetings between local and foreign artists during excursions in which San Martín's aesthetic traditions and the use of natural pigments are discovered. For its part, **Sacharuna Adventure** focuses its proposal on ecotourism and experiential tourism visits to native communities. The Cordillera Escalera's proximity to San Roque de Cumbaza forms the basis of the design of hiking and trekking routes in the mountains. The area has inspired ingenious ways to position local products, such as **Don Emiliano**, a coffee planted at an elevation of more than 1200 meters in the Chontal sector (Añakiwi center) of the Cordillera Escalera. Here, the coffee plants coexist with wild flowers such as orchids and bromeliads. It is a family enterprise whose members participate in all stages: sowing, roasting, and bagging. Their best agricultural practices also contribute to reforestation in the area.



© Conservamos por Naturaleza / SPDA

CHAZUTA

5

THE ARTISAN'S HANDS

It takes just twelve minutes from Chazuta to reach the **Wasichay Cultural Center**. But it takes many years to fully understand the wisdom of the potters who craft the products there. It is a large space, with a patio and gardens for exhibitions. The artisans also deliver workshops so that visitors can make their own pot or sculpture in the Wasichay style. A sign at the entrance that says "Allima Shamuska Willashunki" (Welcome, in Lamas Quechua). Elena Burga Cabrera, a promoter of bilingual intercultural education, claims that the Amazon is home to forty-three of the forty-seven indigenous languages spoken in Peru. In areas bordering the Huallaga rivers, Lamas Quechua is spoken in almost two hundred communities, although there are distinctive characteristics that mark the dialects of Lamas, Sisa, and Chazuta. Several generations of *chazutinos* pose in a color photograph hanging below the welcome sign: women and children, grandmothers, all wearing bright blouses, necklaces and skirts with colorful patterns. This story began a long time ago. In June 1993, thirty heirs to a

unique artistic tradition formed the **Chazuta Ceramics Association**. Everything these women make—cups, pots, vases, plates, decorative sculptures—has followed a natural philosophy. From Lamas they bring the yellow earth they use for the clay. They collect the white from nearby lagoons. They use natural dyes, such as yana rumi, from a black stone found five hours from Chazuta in the town of Yarina. The women make their brushes using fiber taken from their own hair. They shun varnish, preferring instead to use a natural resin applied as soon as the pieces leave the oven. This rigor earned these ceramic workers the status of **Cultural Patrimony of the Nation in 2012**. Currently twelve potters ply this beautiful and detailed craft. They have participated in dozens of national fairs such as Lima's Ruraq Maki. Ruth Chasnamote Pilco has been the president of the association for three years. And, at eighty years of age, María Lizeth Cenepo continues to dedicate hours and hours of her time to depicting her dreams on ceramic.



© Marlon del Águila

TARAPOTO

6

RESTLESS GASTRONOMY

For a long time, regional Amazon gastronomy only put on display its most emblematic recipes: from *juanes* and *tacachos*, to *cecina* and *chorizos*. At night, on several corners in Tarapoto, street vendors would assemble their grills and prepare river fish wrapped in leaves, and sides of more *tacacho*, *patacones* (large pieces of mashed and fried banana), and a hot pepper sauce. Whilst there was much talk of the great Amazon pantry and the profound culinary knowledge in native communities, none of this had yet appeared in the restaurants of the city. That began to change twenty-five years ago, when Elia García resigned from her job as a secretary in a telephone company and, together with her husband and her mother-in-law, decided to venture out on her own and open **La Patarashca**, located in the center of Tarapoto. She had lived on a farm and her great grandmother (also a cook) had been a member of the Lamas Quechua native community. Elia capitalized on this encounter with cuisine to express all its ancestral knowledge in unique recipes that showcase the region's ingredients. River fish

such as *doncella*, *gilt*, and *gamitan* turned into *patarashcas* (bijao leaves wraps cooked on embers). She made *avispajuanes* with ground pork and egg, and *chonta*, using river shrimp or *paiche*—the giant fish that dominates the Amazon's rivers. Today, Elia is still in charge in the kitchen, but also publishes books of recipes from the matriarchs of San Martín. She has expanded the business, which now includes a hotel next door and the **Suchiche café and bar**. This is where experience meets youth. The bartender, Robert Lopez, prepares cocktails with llama *llaullo*, a kind of Amazon whiskey made from honey, propolis, seven roots, and macerated brandy cane. Nearby, Dennys Yupanqui, a young Peruvian chef, has recently opened **Natural**, a restaurant that pushes the limits of the Amazon pantry and is decorated with works by local artists. He might use fresh *paiche*, make *purée* with *pituca* (a tuber larger than cassava), crown the dishes with ants that taste like lemon, or create a *cebiche* using fruits like rose apple or *taperiba*. Dennys plans to open **Chacarero**, a space for Amazon comfort food.



© Natural Restaurant

COLUMN

CINDY REÁTEGUI

TARAPOTO BUSINESSWOMAN



When I think of Tarapoto, the first sensation that comes to me is not an image but a perfume. If it could be defined, it would be the smell of the earth, the plants, and of nature in its most effervescent state. The soundtrack of my personal jungle also switches on: the birds singing, and the rushing river (whose noise is somehow different when it rains). It is only after these powerful and evocative senses that I am able to bring to mind the images: rainbows, starry nights, the changing colors of the plants at sunset.

Growing up watching my mother Elia García develop her **La Patarashca** restaurant was enough to inspire me to follow my own journey, to replicate her discipline, and to start new projects, like the **Suchiche cafe** and bar, and the **Canto del Rio lodge** in Cumbaza.

For me, one of the planet's most beautiful places is right here: the **Río Abiseo National Park**. As a proud native of Tarapoto I could mention more: **El Breo** waterfall; the **Pucayacu** waterfall; the **Achinamiza** hot springs at that natural border where the mountains end and the Amazon plain begins. I am due to visit Yurilamas, a small valley where Lamas Quechua families live, between Lamas and Yurimaguas. I dream of the day when **Gran Pajatén**, that hidden citadel in the middle of the "cloud kingdom," becomes the next Machu Picchu.

The white gold of Piura

REPORT

By Santiago Bullard
Journalist



A fruit hides in the north of Peru that is coveted by chocolatiers and gastronomy specialists the world over: the white cacao of Piura. Iván Murrugarra, a Piurano and protagonist in the growth of the local cacao industry, explains to us the history of this peculiar product.

The cacao trail can take unexpected turns. Native to the rainforests of the Americas, this fruit continues to shine among the jewels of Amazonian agriculture in Peru, as it has done since ancient times. But new norths have appeared on the map of its production in our country.

In mid-2018, Lima hosted the XII National Quality Cacao Competition. Contrary to most expectations, first prize did not go to any producer from the Amazon region; instead the victor was from the other side of the mountains. The Norandino Cooperative is a group of associations from Chulucanas, in the department of Piura. The key to its triumph was one particular product: white cacao.

New latitudes

If you have ever walked under the shade of the cacao trees in a jungle crop you may find it difficult to imagine a scene like the one found in the middle of the department of Piura. The carob and the pasallo trees replace the cético in forests that take on the appearance of deserts the moment the rains stop. Only the heat is the same. And yet, white cocoa has become one of the most important crops in Piura, especially in the mountain regions that extend between Chulucanas and Morropón.



1. Inner beauty. To the naked eye, the fruit of white cacao is very similar to any other variety (*Theobroma cacao*). The difference is found in its interior, in its white colored pulp, and in its white and violet beans endowed with a flavor of great intensity.
© Orlando Canessa

2. Sweet. The cacao's mucilage is already being used by farmers and chocolatiers. This is the fruit in its natural state, when it is covered by a kind of mucus which has rather acidic and sweet notes.
© Orlando Canessa



3.

3. Profession: cacao grower. Iván Murrugarra, founder of Cacao Adventures and Magia Piura (Piura Magic), has dedicated seven years of his life to researching, cultivating, processing, and marketing cacao. This has led him to travel throughout Peru, although his own crops are located in Piura.
© Gustavo Vivanco / Mil Centrov

At first glance, the fruit of white cocoa is not particularly different to any other variety. Even the color of its shell is the same. That is, of course, until one opens it. Instead of the characteristic brownish tone, the grains inside are as white as a cloud. "It is a very different product, with very distinct characteristics, although technically it belongs to the same species," says Iván Murrugarra, who has dedicated the last seven years of his life to studying and producing cacaos, especially those with this profile. "Actually, white cacao is not native to Piura," continues Murrugarra. "It originated in the Marañón basin, but came from Jaén and Bagua in the 19th century and adapted to the new ecosystem." This variety of cacao is currently grown in the mountainous regions of Piura, especially between the towns of Chulucanas and Morropón. This change of scenery has had important consequences. "Genetics and soil type are two determining factors which give the product a new identity, such as its intensity, or its citrus, floral, and red fruit notes."

The science of cacao

The story of Ivan Murrugarra has also been full of unexpected twists and turns. An economist by profession, he decided to move from numbers to sweets and entered the world of confectionery. It was whilst following this path that he discovered cacao, and, recognizing its potential, decided to study the product in more detail.

White cacao is native to the Marañón basin, but it has adapted to the geography of the mountains of Piura.

COLUMN

IVÁN MURRUGARRA

PIURA CHOCOLATIER AND
CACAO RESEARCHER



Cacao is a world of its own and right now we are still in the midst of rediscovering it. Although we have made tremendous advances and learned a great deal, there is still much more to develop and put on show. Peru actually has the potential to lead the world in the production of cacao; however, to reach this goal we must start by working from within.

We need to be conscious that we are talking about an original product that forms part of our culture. White cacao forms just 0.25% of world production, some of which takes place in the Piura region of Peru. Today there is tremendous activity among producers. And gastronomy is developing in ways which help to forge a greater identity for cacao. But we still need to boost local consumption, which in turn will generate profitability and lead to growth. We want cacao to be produced as raw material, in bean form, and also in the form of processed products, such as chocolate bars. The big market is out there.



Murrugarra is 35 years old, has eight cacaos tattooed on his forearm, and designed Cacao Mil for the Virgilio Martínez project in Moray.



4. High-end pastries. Jordi Roca, head of confectionery at El Celler de Can Roca, is developing a new venture in Girona (Spain) called Casa Cacao, which will feature white cacao from Piura. © Orlando Canessa

He completed his training with a group of Venezuelan agronomists, and, soon after, began his own project: Cacao Adventures. “My idea was to do a study about the product, its genetics, and its processes. So I created Cacao Adventures as a platform to make the research profitable,” says the entrepreneur. The result of this initiative was the creation of what he calls a “map of flavors” at the national level. This tool measures the influence that various natural factors can have on cacao, such as elevation, soil type, or the proximity of rivers. Geography and science came together on the same page as gastronomy. This research has taken Murrugarra to the most distant corners of Peru, but he continues to invest in white cacao. A little over three years ago, he created his own brand, Magia Piura (Piura Magic), and began selling the products he had developed through his exhaustive cacao studies, ranging from chocolates to craft beers. He also supplies important overseas

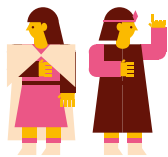
companies, such as Mirazur (France) and El Celler de Can Roca, in Girona (Spain), considered one of the world’s best restaurants.

“Magic Piura is backed by the research platform that I have developed over the years, which allows us to give the product a very special treatment,” says Murrugarra. “We grow cacao in the upper part of Piura, in the Morropón area, but we apply very precise protocols, thanks to what I have learned in Marañón and in Cusco.”

The care that local producers have given to their cacao is paying off. It’s not just about winning national competitions. Nowadays, the white cacao bean is one of the most sought-after (and most profitable) fine dining products around the world. And, as Iván Murrugarra is well aware, it still has a long way to go, no matter how many twists and turns the road may bring.

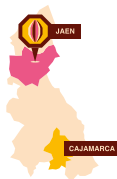
INFORMATION

CACAO IN OTHER REGIONS



An ancestral relationship

Although for a long time it was believed that cacao consumption began in Central America, recent findings suggest that the origins lie in southern Ecuador and northern Peru. In an excavation he undertook in Jaén, the archaeologist Quirino Olivera found cacao remains that date back at least 5000 years.



Luxury product

Located in the northern department of Cajamarca, the province of Jaén continues to produce quality cacao. Although small in volume, the production uses a native fruit with great aromatic intensity and licorice and dried fruit notes. This cacao grows at an elevation of 900 meters.



Beyond volume

Located in Peru’s northern jungle, the department of San Martín is the main national producer of cacao. In addition to harvesting by volume to extract the bean, the region has encouraged associations and local cooperatives, such as La Orquídea, to develop the fruit’s derivative products.



Organic growth

Peruvian cacao is one of the main characters in the book *Casa Cacao*, written by the Spaniards Ignacio Medina (gastronomy journalist), and Jordi Roca (pastry chef at El Celler de Can Roca). The work includes various recipes, and describes part of the history of cacao and some of the many gastronomy experiences the authors have enjoyed.

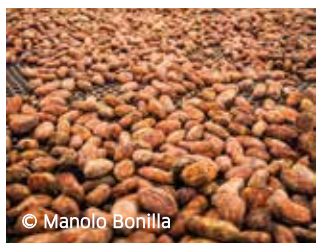
The sweet world of the Mishkis

REPORT



THE ORIGIN

In 2003, a United States agency arrives in Chazuta to implement its crop substitution program: coca for cacao. A group of women sees a new opportunity. They obtain training, buy and sow some seeds, and then wait for the harvest a year later. In 2009, six women found the Mishki Cacao association. They lack refrigerators, but roast the beans in a pan, grind them using a *batán* implement, and then go out across Chazuta's fourteen neighborhoods to sell chocolates wrapped in bijao leaves.



© Manolo Bonilla

THE BAR

By 2011 the group has begun to participate in national fairs, such as the *Salón del Chocolate* at *Expoalimentaria*. In *Místura*, they presents a 100% chocolate bar. They cause a sensation by performing a short song to launch their bars.



© Karina Mendoza/PROMPERÚ

THE PROOF

Today, Ayli Quinteros Cenepo, Vice President of Mishki Cacao, directs the work of thirteen chocolatiers from Chazuta. She was part of the first group of women entrepreneurs. In 2014 she traveled to France for the *Salon du Chocolat* in Paris. Cacao has changed Ayli's life: through the Mishki Cacao adventure, she obtained an education, traveled, found a profession, and discovered values such as strength and leadership.



© Manolo Bonilla

A group of women from Chazuta, two hours from Tarapoto, decided to showcase one of the region's products: the majambo. They made chocolate, became independent, and even made it to the 2014 *Salon du Chocolat* in Paris.



© Manolo Bonilla

MAJAMBO

In 2012, when they decided to diversify their products, Ayli appeared with a majambo, an endemic fruit which, although larger than the cacao, is part of the same family. In fact, it looks like a nut, and has a neutral flavor with a hint of almonds or beans. In Chazuta, they ate it fried as a snack or as an *anticucho* (a skewer on the grill). To Paris they took majambo chocolate bars which had acquired sublime lactic notes.

Private Conservation Areas: A national treasure

GUIDE

By Jack Lo
Environmental journalist



Berlín Forest Private Conservation Area

The Rimarachín family is conserving a forest where the mist takes over everything. This must be one of the easiest places to find the endemic yellow-tailed woolly monkey, one of the most sought after species in the north of the country. Crystal clear waterfalls, homemade breakfasts, stunning sunsets, and other activities in their organic garden connect the visitor with nature. The family also offers tour packages for discovering other unexplored areas around Bagua Grande. You just have to be willing to walk and explore. We recommend listening to Don Ricardo's innumerable stories about the four decades the family has spent in this forest. And going out early for a walk to find the unique waterfalls and come face to face with the Andean cock-of-the-rock as it flits amongst the mist.

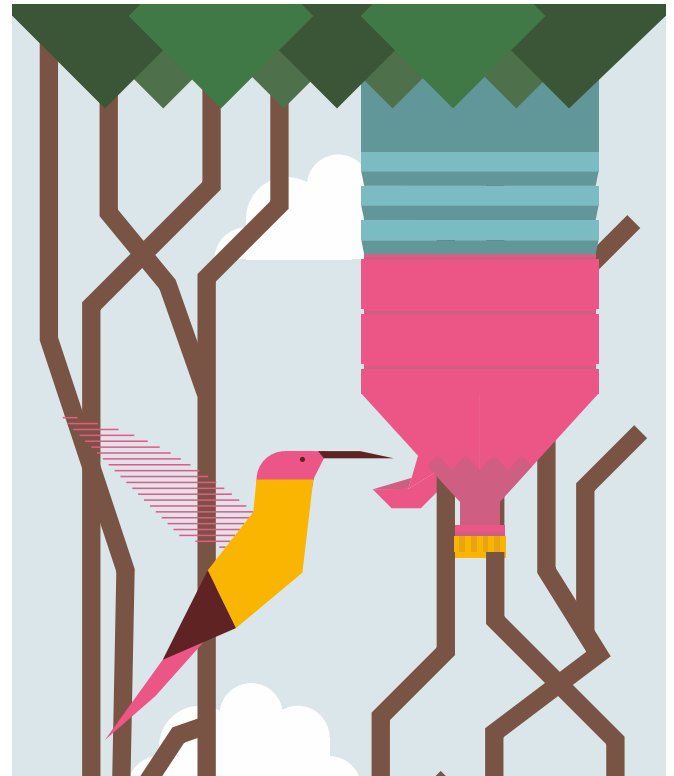
- Location:** Amazonas
- Elevation:** 2,000-2,600 meters
- Environment:** Cloud forest
- Ideal visiting time:** From May to December

Arriving:

Bagua Grande is the starting point for this visit. A van leaving from the Alto Peru bus stop transports you to the hamlet of Santa Clara (the trip takes one hour). From there you have to walk an hour and a half to reach the conservation area.

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Gotas de Agua Private Conservation Reserve

This corner of Peru is unique in the world. Experts claim that it is home to a higher percentage of endemic species than the Galapagos Islands. Bird watchers come from all over the planet to marvel at its diversity. In the middle of this land, known as the Dry Forests of the Marañón, the Troyes family have created a conservation area that serves as a natural laboratory for anyone seeking direct contact with nature. Located just fifteen minutes from Jaén, here is where one can completely unwind. The visitor can observe more than seventy bird species and also discover the Hermógenes Mejía Solf Museum, which conserves the Pakamuro culture, classified as one of the world's ten greatest archaeological discoveries.

- Location:** Cajamarca
- Elevation:** 729 meters
- Environment:** Dry forest
- Ideal visiting time:** From June to November

Arriving:

Gotas de Agua is located in the sector known as El Pongo, six kilometers from Montegrande. The trip from Jaén, where LATAM flights land, takes fifteen minutes by car, forty minutes on a bike, and one hour on foot.

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Milpuj - La Heredad Private Conservation Area

Lola Arce left everything behind in the city to dedicate her life to conserving the forest where she grew up. With the help of her son Perico, Lola has used her own hands to build houses that seem to be made of biscuit and caramel and where one can find deep relaxation. Her conservation area is the perfect base for exploring this part of the Utcubamba Valley. Located just a few minutes from Leymebamba, the visitor can access an alternative route to Kuélap, and can also travel easily towards the Gocta waterfall and the city of Chachapoyas. Here you will have the opportunity to put your hands in the soil and harvest your own organic food. You can also help out on the farm, and feed the ducks, chickens, and turkeys. It is a nice opportunity to discover an inspiring life story.



- Location:** Amazonas
- Elevation:** 1,800 meters
- Environment:** Seasonal dry forest
- Ideal visiting time:** From April to December

Arriving:

By car take the paved road from Chachapoyas to Leymebamba. One hour later you will reach the town of Nogalculo. The conservation area is 500 meters beyond, on the left hand side. You can also take a local bus from Chachapoyas.

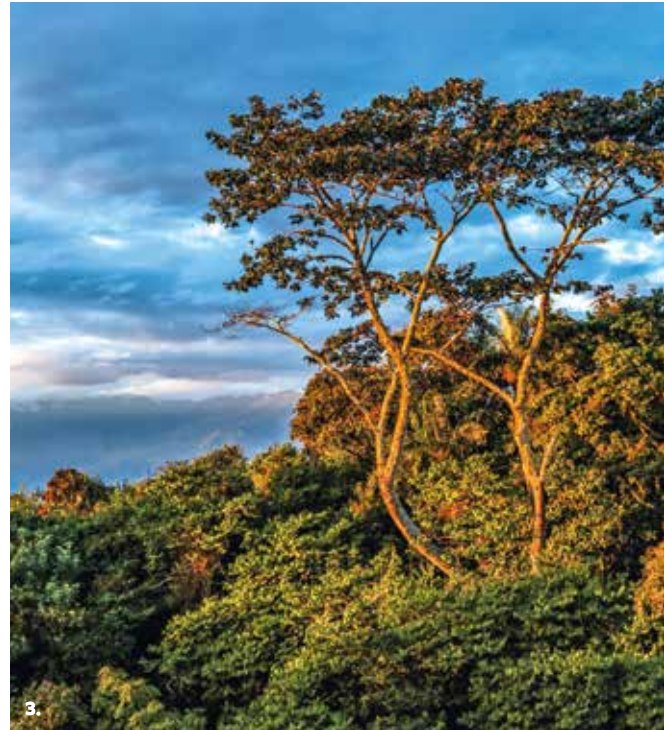
Contact details:

Pedro Heredia Arce

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- Berlin Forest.** The must-see in this conservation area is a patch of forest where a family of yellow-tailed woolly monkeys lives. © Conservamos por Naturaleza / SPDA
- Milpuj.** Do not miss the opportunity to try Lola's spicy tree tomato sauce. © Conservamos por Naturaleza / SPDA
- Los Chilchos.** If you have a little more time, take a one day walk to the secret waterfall, where you can observe up to three species of monkeys as they splash around. © Conservamos por Naturaleza / SPDA



Los Chilchos Private Conservation Area

At 46 thousand hectares, this private conservation area is Peru's largest. From Leymebamba, walks of twelve hours each will take you to a choice of the Lagoon of the Condors, or the community of Los Chilchos, full of hospitable and loving people. Of the two, Los Chilchos is lesser known but just as impressive: steep climbs, plateaus that look like Mars, and birds flying all about. At times you will feel that you are walking on clouds, while others you will find yourself amongst archaeological remains, such as the mausoleums of the lagoon. Little by little, the route affords you scenery that make the effort worthwhile. If you do not wish to walk, you can complete the journey on horseback. This trip is highly recommended for any explorer in search of adventure.

- Location:** Amazonas-San Martín
- Elevation:** 2,200-3,800 meters
- Environment:** Montane forest
- Ideal visiting time:** From May to October

Arriving:

The walk begins in Leymebamba, which you can reach overland from Chachapoyas (two hours). The nearest cities with an airport are Chachapoyas and Jaén.

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Ucumari NGO / Alan Meléndez

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Abra Patricia Private Conservation Area

This conservation area, managed by the NGO ECOAN, is a kind of Disneyland for birdwatchers; curious people who want to see it all, and will go without sleep to achieve their goals. From all over the world they come to find orchids, or to see birds, like the bearded owl, that can only exist in these mountains. With any luck, along the trails you will also come across coatis, armadillos, yellow-tailed woolly monkeys, and even spectacled bears. Nearby, is the Huembo interpretation center, also managed by the NGO, home to the prized spatula hummingbird.

- Location:** Amazonas
- Elevation:** 800-3,009 meters
- Environment:** Upper jungle
- Ideal visiting time:** From June to November

Arriving:

Access is via the Fernando Belaúnde Terry Highway (km. 364.5, on the section from Pedro Ruiz to Moyobamba). Travel is also possible from Chiclayo (eleven hours), Jaén (five hours), and Tarapoto (four hours).

Contact details:

Área de Reservas ECOAN
Gleny Vera Meléndez

- reservas@ecoanperu.org**
- (+51) (084) 227 988, Anexo 21 / 984 564 884**



From all over the world come curious people to find orchids or see birds that are only found in these mountains in the Abra Patricia.



Tambo Ilusión Private Conservation Area

Just fifteen minutes from Tarapoto, this conservation area is very well organized and ideal for experiencing peace and tranquility. It offers packages that include yoga, meditation, permaculture, ayahuasca sessions, and various other activities that will cleanse your body and make you feel more relaxed. Exquisite vegan meals are also available. You can go out for walks in the forest, stopping to swim in the rivers and streams you come across. If you feel energetic, there is a natural lagoon located a few meters from the cabins where you can bathe at any time of the day. Your hosts, Armando and Johanne, will help you make the most of your time at this private investment in responsible nature tourism.

- Location:** San Martín
- Elevation:** 400 meters
- Environment:** Upper jungle
- Ideal visiting time:** From May to February

Arriving:

Take the road to Yurimaguas and turn off after 2.5 km at the detour to the right (after Venice lagoon). From there it is only one kilometer to the conservation area. It is fifteen minutes from Tarapoto.

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tamboilusion.com

- info@tamboilusion.com / artynan@gmail.com**
- (+51) 942 754 466**



- 4. **Tambo ilusión.** An ideal place to practice yoga, meditation, and ancient ceremonies. © Conservamos por Naturaleza / SPDA
- 5. **Abra Patricia.** If you want to stand next to the experts and observe the greatest number of birds, this is the place. © Conservamos por Naturaleza / SPDA
- 6. **Tingana.** The recommendation here is a nocturnal walk, during which you will be surprised by the sounds and shapes of the forest. © Conservamos por Naturaleza / SPDA

Private Conservation Areas mentioned in *La Ruta Natural* by the Sociedad Privada de Derecho Ambiental (SPDA).
 More information at:
www.conservamospornaturaleza.org/



Tingana Reserve

Everything becomes magical when you enter this corner of San Martín. By canoe you pass through an amphibious forest that captivates you with its sounds and movement. It has an aura of mystery and of night. It is very easy to see the animals. Monkeys will jump all over you. Birds of all colors will observe you as if you were the rare species. The experience culminates when your guides invite you to camp on the platforms they have built in the forest trees. This flooded forest has an area of more than 3500 hectares. A group of people is totally committed to the conservation of this unique and special place. The food they serve, made with cecina and chonta, is simple and tasty. Do yourself a favor and buy chocolate that they produce.

- 📍 **Location:** San Martín
- Elevation:** 811 meters
- Environment:** Upper jungle
- Ideal visiting time:** All year round

- 🚌 **Arriving:**
 Take a bus from Tarapoto to Moyobamba (two hours) and then head to Puerto La Boca on the Huascayacu river (forty-five minutes). Then, aboard a motor boat, you will reach Tingana in about one hour.

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Height and intensity: amongst snowcaps, lagoons, and forests



PHOTOGRAPHIC DOSSIER



THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

© Dickens Rondán / PROMPERÚ
The Cordillera Huayhuash extends over part of the departments of Áncash, Huánuco and Lima, and at its northern end meets the Cordillera Blanca. Six of its summits exceed 6000 meters in height. At 6634 meters,

Yerupajá is Peru's second highest mountain. Siula Grande is another highlight, rising up to 6344 meters. It is the setting for the book *Touching the Void*, by English climber Joe Simpson, a member of the first expedition to conquer the peak, in 1985.



VERTICAL BEAUTY

© Dickens Rondán / PROMPERÚ
Due to the extraordinary scenery, specialist media organizations such as the BBC and National Geographic have referred to the trekking circuits of the Cordillera Huayhuash as some of the most beautiful in the world. These trails vary in difficulty

and duration. The most famous begins in the town of Cajatambo and crosses the Pumarinri and Cuyoc gorges on its way to the community of Huallapa. The mountain range owes its beauty not just to the snowcapped mountains, but also to its high Andean lagoons, such as Viconga or Carhuacocha.



WILD FRONTIER

© Marlon del Águila / PROMPERÚ
Forming a natural boundary between the high forest and the Amazonian plain, the Cordillera Azul extends between the Huallaga and Ucayali rivers and across part of the departments of Loreto, San Martín, Ucayali, and Huánuco. Its elevation ranges from 200 to 2400 meters

above sea level. The mountain range houses the headwaters of the rivers that feed a large number of the surrounding communities. The Cordillera Azul National Park was established in 2001. It covers an area of more than 13,500 square kilometers of this ancient mountain range formed between the Jurassic and Cretaceous ages.



BIODIVERSITY TREASURE

© Marlon del Águila / PROMPERÚ

The boundaries of Cordillera Azul National Park house the country's largest reserves of untouched upper jungle. Its humid forests are home to a large number of endemic species of flora and fauna, many of them in danger of extinction. The list includes a wide variety

of birds, such as the macaw, the parrot, the mountain guan, the harpy eagle, and the purple honeycreeper (pictured). Large mammals, such as the jaguar or the spectacled bear, are also present. So too are various types of frogs, lizards, and snakes. There are more than six thousand plant species.



Áncash Mount Yanapaccha in the Cordillera Blanca

By Richard Hidalgo
Mountaineer



A question of altitude. Hidalgo has been to the top of some of the highest mountains in the world. As a mountaineer, his goal is to reach the summit of each of the fourteen snow caps that exceed eight thousand meters—without using supplementary oxygen. He has already conquered five of them, in the Himalayas.

They took this picture two years ago during a climb to Mount Yanapaccha, in the Cordillera Blanca, not far from Huaraz. Although I had been on that mountain about five times, on this occasion I returned specifically to create a file of images and videos. I chose the exact point at which the photograph would be taken: in the background, on the horizon, you can see the four peaks of Mount Huandoy, Mount Pisco, and the two peaks of Mount Chacaraju. It is a beautiful landscape, and one that reflects the potential that this part of the Andes has for mountain lovers. But not only that. I think it should also make us reflect on what we are losing because of climate change, and on what we need to conserve.

The Cordillera Blanca is one of the most affected places. My experience as a mountaineer makes me very conscious of the retreat and erosion of the region's glaciers. Sometimes, and particularly following a snowfall, you might think that the glaciers have recovered, because they are covered with snow. But the real damage is not visible. It is under the snow, where dangerous holes and cracks are forming. We have the privilege of such impressive and beautiful regions in Huaraz. They are a dream for mountaineers and travelers from all over the world. We must do everything we can to protect them.



Huayhuash Mountain Range Áncash



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