

Dear Friends and Family,

Phiroze and I have travelled extensively in the past and thought another major tour to South America might be too ambitious. We had not visited that continent so when Nilufer Mama's Millenium Tour came to us through the Chamber of Commerce, we decided to join her tour which turned out to be a real winning decision. She is our relative from Karachi and we enjoyed the trip very much.

Nilufer's eighteen day tour to Peru, Chile, Argentina and Brazil was what we had wanted to do for years. Her group consisted of just nine of us; other than the two of us, all were Parsees from Canada including one Indian Canadian couple. We were all grandparents except for dear Rayomand Antia, a warm humorous and caring person and Nilufer, our terrific tour operator who arranged all our needs. She is experienced and very competent.

Our group became our family as everyone was so caring during the strenuous climbs and treks. Their sense of humor with all the badgering from Phiroze was a huge relief. Our thanks to all the support we received from our new friends, Armaity, Phiroze, Dinaz, Ray, Nilufer, Chitra and Kunal.

Since we came from Los Angeles we arrived in Lima, Peru one night earlier. We were met at the airport and taken to our hotel. The next morning the Canadians arrived. In the afternoon we toured the city and saw the cathedral and the Square. We had dinner and a folklore show together at the hotel. We flew to Cusco at a higher altitude than even Machu Picchu. None of us were affected by the altitude. We were advised to drink cocoa tea. We stayed at a spacious Ranch hotel with individual cottages. We visited the local animals – alpaca, llama jaguar, condor etc. The lunch and dinner were delicious. The people are a mix of Inca Indian and Spanish.

Our narrow gauge train ride to Machu Picchu, (Old Mountain) was very interesting. This site has been designated by UNESCO as the man made seventh wonder of the world. It was worth every minute that we spent there. The charming market with hand made wares was reasonable and the people helpful.



Our knowledgeable guide gave us an intimate history of the Spaniards who in their quest for gold made Lima their western capital. Fortunately, they failed to discover Machu Picchu while the Inca civilization collapsed through internal, tribal jealousy which was exploited by Spain. The sources of the great Amazon River flowed from this area of the Andes mountain range. The discovery of this amazing site was by an American named Hiram Bingham from Colorado. It rained as we climbed the cut out plateaus of this ancient city and marveled that it still remained unspoiled. We were entertained with music on the return train ride to Cusco and were served an elegant dinner.

We left Cusco early for Santiago, Chile via Lima. On our free night, we chose to walk to a Chinese restaurant. Santiago is a clean city with beautiful apartment buildings and homes. The square once again had a statue of Martin who won independence from Spain for Peru, Chile and Argentina. All three countries revere him. The next day we visited Valparaiso meaning Paradise as it was like arriving in Paradise after crossing the Straits of Magellan, the roughest waters in the world at the tip of South

America. The city was an important port until the Panama Canal was built. From the ocean, one could see the colorful houses so that they would be easily recognized. Throughout Chile the sea food was extraordinary. The wines were exceptional. This narrow and long country has a stable economy. We were given a farewell dinner at a superb restaurant.

We departed for Buenos Aires, Argentina the most European of cities in South America. We immediately toured the Tango bars and were taken for a typical Argentinian meal. There is no better place for beef than Argentina which prides itself on its cattle on the fertile Pampas. We visited a Gaucho ranch where we rode and were entertained during lunch by attractive tango dancers. The city has European architecture, the large family tombs for their famous citizens and it has an Opera house with great acoustics. The Tango Show and dinner was an important cultural statement.

We flew to Iguazu Falls designated by UNESCO as the Seventh Natural wonder of the world. Wow! What a sight! We trekked through the Rain Forest to get the best views of the Water Falls which bordered Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. Our guide was excellent and waited if one of the group was slow in walking the long route. We were in the tropics and it was humid. Our hotel was a welcome haven and the cuisine was delicious as we had experienced everywhere. We crossed the International border and entered Brazil and trekked in the Rain Forest, named a world Heritage Site, for incredible views of the Argentinian side of the Iguazu Falls. From here we took the flight to Rio de Janeiro.



Rio de Janeiro named by a Portuguese sea captain in the month of January and because he thought it was the mouth of a river. There was no river. This city is incredibly beautiful with bays, lagoons, mountains and a marine drive called Copacabana.



Sugar Loaf Mountain, named by a seaman because it looked like bread with white sugar crystals (seagull droppings) on the top, is a mountain ride to admire the city. The train ride high up the Corcovado Mountain through tropical flora ended with the huge statue of Christ the Redeemer 2,300 feet high with a chapel under the statue.

The slums are colorful houses built on top of each other up the mountain. After the slaves were freed, they had nowhere to go but up the mountain. Hence they have the best views of the city. After touring the city with its large, modern cathedral, the stadium (soccer is Brazil's popular past time) and beautiful environs we ended with an extravaganza show with dinner. Brazil is the largest, most populous and wealthiest of South American nations. Rich in gems, food and minerals, with the great Amazon River through the jungle, it

is the only Portuguese speaking country on the continent. The Spaniards found no gold so in a pact between the two countries, decided to let Portugal keep Brazil.

We arrived in Sao Paulo, Brazil's largest, richest and most industrial city to take our flights home.

I noted that South America is further to the East than one imagines. The East of the North American continent is at the same longitude as the west of South America. Lima was three hours ahead of Los Angeles, Santiago four hours ahead, Buenos Aires five hours ahead and Rio de Janeiro six hours ahead of the west coast of the United States and Canada. In Rio we were only two hours away from Greenwich Mean Time.

Nilufer arranged everything beautifully allowing us to rest in the Marriott hotel prior to catching our flight to L.A. via Panama. We recommend all future tours with Nilufer's Millenium Travels. She works hard, aims to please and has access to all the world's continents. The hotels, the guides, the restaurants and the transportation were all great! Try her out! We recommend her highly.

DhunMai Dalal

*Photographs taken by Phiroze Dalal*