

MUSUQ CHASKI - El Mensajero Nuevo



ProjectsAbroad



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La Virgen de la "O": Christmas Celebrations arrive early in Yucay

Jorge Espinoza

Christmas is a festival awaited with great expectations in many parts of the world and one of the places where there is a lot of attention around this date is in Yucay district, located 3km from the province of Urubamba. For people born in this district (Yucavinos), Christmas is the most important holiday of the year and begins with the celebration of the Virgen de la O, who is the patron saint of the district, and takes place on the 17th and 18th December each year.



This virgin represents the hope of the Birth of Niño Jesus. Her name has its origins in Spain because after reciting the evening prayer at that time, the choir held a long "O". The "O" expresses an attitude of wonder, expectation and hope for the coming of the Messiah.

The party in Yucay which is dedicated to the patron saint, is an example of the religious syncretism that occurred after the arrival of the Spanish where both religions (Catholic and Andean) fused, resulting in religious and pagan celebrations occurring at the same time. In conclusion there are Catholic elements such as the Catholic Mass, blessings and prayers and Andean elements such as dances, food and drink in large quantities.

The party is prepared well in advance by each "cargo" - or group representing a dance of the various dances for the virgin as a sign of respect and adoration - making invitations and Jurcas (which are commitments to assist in the party with food, drinks, dance costumes, music bands, fireworks, etc.).

On the afternoon of the 17th the festival kicks off with dance performances which are directed at the main temple where the image of the Virgin is paid



homage to, and then at night there is a fireworks display in the main square followed by a dinner at each Carguyoq's house (the person in charge of the Cargo) where guests attend.



The next day they celebrate a Mass for the virgin who will later leave the temple and make her way through the village on the main avenue, blessing the people, followed by their respective Cargo dances and bands to the chapel of Santiago Apostol, which is also located in the same town. The Virgin will stay in this chapel until December 25th to make the journey back

to the temple as part of the celebration of Christmas.

The Cargos continue that day at the Carguyoqs' houses where there is music, special food (probably including guinea pig) and many drinks.

It's interesting to see this celebration not only because of its importance for the people of Yucay but because of the many cultural elements that are present during the festival.

Project Updates

What's New?

The **INCA** Project, as usual, has been busy for our Inca volunteers who are continuing to clear ruins in Q'ochapata. Work is also ongoing at Capillayok with the pointing of newly reconstructed walls. Ruins have been found in Choquello and work on the Inca Trail has continued, including a walk along the trail. English lessons are also taking place in coordination with the INC (National Institute of Culture).

Work in and around El Establo continues, including some general maintenance and the new trout tank. Quiz nights are now regularly taking place in Establo. Volunteers were invited to yet another Baptism in Huyro! Community work has included the clearing of a school playground and the cleaning of classrooms in the new primary school in Huyro. Sports continues, with a football tournament in Amaybamba with the INC and other local teams, as well as football and volleyball in Establo. Lessons with Jhon have included Lucumayu Valley and Incas, Tribes & Structures. Finally volunteers have visited the hot springs in Colcamayo.



In **CARE** this month, we held a lunch with the teachers and Care volunteers in Calca to talk about our progress this year and the things we want to do in the coming year. Volunteers have been busy in their placements preparing materials, games and decorations for Christmas.

In **TEACHING** we had our last Network Meeting for this year on Thursday 19th November for all Teaching volunteers and partner organisation teachers. We reviewed the help of our volunteers during this year and Tim gave a talk about Projects Abroad as an organisation and our intentions for the next year.



Volunteer Social Activities

Tessa Okell

The November Social saw volunteers enjoying the beautiful ruins of El Palacio de Huayna Ccapac in Urubamba and a stunning walk around Chichubamba. Volunteers then enjoyed a delicious four-course meal in Don Antonio restaurant in Urubamba and a few rounds of Sapo. Congratulations to 'The Champions' who won after a disappointing start, with Director Tim getting the highest possible points with a coin landing right in the toad's mouth!



December saw the last Pub Quiz of the year in The Muse in Urubamba. Two teams battled out a general knowledge round, Thank-You-card making round and a Karaoke round (good job Martin). The following Wednesday saw the Pub Quiz being converted slightly into a Film Night in Tawa, where volunteers had a good giggle at 'Notting Hill'. The Pub Quiz will resume in the New Year as normal!

Coffee and Cake in Calca was attended by some enthusiastic Christmas-decoration-making-volunteers and some beautiful decorations were made (at the same time as some delicious chocolate cake was consumed). Decorations were then taken to volunteers' placements to brighten up the classrooms over the festive period.



A fond farewell...

This month we shall be saying goodbye to our Desk Officer Hannah Partis. Hannah has been working with us here in Urubamba for nearly three years now, advising the volunteers on their up-coming trips and forming an important part of the team who provide support to them once they finally arrive here to carry out projects with us. Hannah will be replaced by Guillermina Sanchez, who some of you already met at our November social. She shall be joining us from the 4th January, so you can direct any questions that you might have to her at peru@projects-abroad.org. Hannah will be missed by staff and volunteers alike and on behalf of everyone in the Projects Abroad Perú family: ¡Suerte y buen viaje!

GETTING TO KNOW OUR STAFF...

Hannah Partis, Desk Officer

When I look back on the first time that I arrived in Peru it typically follows the lines of many volunteer stories that I have previously edited for the newsletter over the past couple of years. I remember hearing the sound of panpipes as I came down into the baggage collection area at Cusco airport and as I came out into the surprisingly warm Andean sun I sat down to wait for the member of staff who was picking me up and I thought to myself, *what on earth am I doing here?* Little did I know then how much Peru would come to mean to me in so many ways.

I first came to Cusco back in May 2005 when I joined what was then *Teaching and Projects Abroad's* teaching programme for three months. I didn't speak a word of Spanish (hence my constant advice to arriving volunteers to learn as much Spanish as you can before you arrive), and I was completely overwhelmed by the beautiful drive through the Valley to Urubamba. The then- Assistant Manager, Juliana, sat chatting to me about various things to do with the project along the journey, on subjects I would find myself discussing a couple of years later when I was doing volunteer pick-ups myself. Not before too long I was left alone with my bags in the courtyard of what would become my new family for the next three months.



As all volunteers find, the first week or two is the time where you experience all the differences from home (most particularly the language difference), the need to get used to the Peruvian education system, the teachers and your students, your host family's way of life and things in general which you can "only find in Peru". Come the third week you have found your feet and after a month you confidently walk down the streets of Urubamba saying good day to people you know, attending the weekly pub quiz, visiting Cusco at the weekends and making friends with locals and volunteers. As most people find, despite the anxiety they first experience upon arrival, the months flew by. As much as I enjoyed my time as a volunteer, and despite the fact that I met my now-husband, I never expected to return to Urubamba, especially with the intention of spending so long here.



After completing my Masters in Sweden, about a year and a half after previously leaving Peru, I found myself returning to Urubamba to work with Projects Abroad as their new Desk Officer. After a training day in the UK before my journey back over to Peru I was nervous yet eager to arrive and start my new job. The Urubamba I found three years later hadn't changed too much, it had definitely grown and there was a new market. The second night after my arrival, when I was in the Plaza, I heard

my name being called out, and within moments I found myself in the arms of my old Peruvian host mother, Melva. The faces that were still around from when I was a volunteer were the same, though a couple of years older. Of the staff that had been working while I was a volunteer only Tim and Irazema were still around, but I soon met and got to know the new Projects Abroad staff and began my training as a Desk Officer. I found life much easier with my improved Spanish and I settled in well and soon found that I was not working in an office with colleagues, but in a well remembered home with a new family. The first year flew by and I extended my stay, volunteers came and left, the questions in my inbox never ceased and I fell into my job with ease and comfort, enjoying the work beside my colleagues in Peru and all over the world.

Now after nearly three years working in the Projects Abroad family, I am moving on to a new and exciting adventure. However, first I shall take some time to explore areas of Peru I have not yet had the chance to see. I shall take away with me some wonderful memories, but just because I am moving on doesn't mean that I shall forget my family and friends here. So I just want to say thank you to everyone for the past three years. It has been fun meeting you and helping in some small way prepare you for your time here in Peru.



And if you have any further questions please don't hesitate to contact me. :)

Volunteer Stories

PERU TIMES TWO!

Sally Bowman

Last year in October I came to Cusco to do a 3 month Teaching placement with Projects Abroad. I was placed with a wonderful family – the Aucca family, who welcomed me into their home and into their hearts.

I was fortunate enough to spend Christmas with my new family and it was a fantastic experience. If anyone has the opportunity to experience Christmas or any special holiday or occasion in another culture, I highly recommend it.

When it was time for me to leave, there were tears and cuddles. I promised to stay in touch and assured them that there was a home for them in Australia too.

Back at home, I had been accepted to return to university to study Linguistics, Spanish and English. After 14 years in the workforce, this was a little daunting but I have really found my niche.

I phoned my Peruvian family a few times last year and there was lots of correspondence between myself and my new brothers and sister. We had formed such a close bond that we were always keen to hear what each other was up to. They were always asking me when I would be back to visit.

I was constantly keeping an eye on flight prices and then one day a great one was offered. I booked my return trip to Peru, which departed the morning after my last exam. I spent the first 2 weeks in Lima, visiting a friend that I had met on my last trip. I arrived back in Cusco last week and will be spending one month visiting my second family.

My 'sister' Leyla met me at the airport and there were big hugs and lots of laughter. We went into town so I could meet my 'brothers' for lunch after they had finished work and university. Again there were more hugs and laughter. They saw me safely into a taxi back to Calca, where Mama was waiting for me at the front door. It was like coming home.



I will be fortunate enough to share another Christmas here in Peru, in the company of my loving second family.

Volunteering with Projects Abroad can open up so many opportunities, as long as you are willing to open your mind and your heart to experiencing EVERYTHING!

Gingerbread creations!

Stella Charrington



I was overjoyed when my eldest host sister wanted to make gingerbread after I told her about them and other Christmas foods in Finland. I was happy to be able to bake something; it's something I miss a lot. I found a recipe, and that evening we made our biscuits. In Finland, gingerbread is called "piparkakku", or "pipari" for short, and they don't actually taste gingery. Instead, the flavours of cinnamon and cardamom take over. They're delicious, especially when served with hot mulled wine with almonds and raisins.

Making gingerbread turned out to be a great idea, as it got my two other host sisters to show their creative side. Though making gingerbread with a 3-year old is incredibly messy and requires patience! In the end, the four of us had managed to produce an array of different shapes; there were trees, fish, smiley faces, rabbits, stars and hearts. The gingerbread biscuits were cooked in the big stone oven used for baking pizza, and were delicious!! They brought back some delightful Finnish Christmas memories from down the years.



Recipe:

Makes roughly 20

200g of butter
125g sugar
1/2 tsp salt
1 egg
cinnamon



1. Mix flour and butter together
2. Whip sugar and egg into a thick foam
3. Add to butter and flour mix along with salt and cinnamon
4. Place in a cool place for 1 hour
5. Make your gingerbread!
6. Place in an oven at 175°C for 5-10 minutes
7. Eat them and enjoy the Christmas feeling!

Marloes Luijten - Inca Project



Woensdag 2 december had iedereen van het Inka-project een echt Peruaans doopfeest. Dit houdt in dat er een doopdienst is. Deze dienst duurt ongeveer 15 minuten. Na de dienst is het gebruikelijk dat je met de familie mee gaat, met hen eet en daarna danst met de familie en de andere gasten. In Peru is het gebruikelijk dat er peetouders zijn. De peetouders moeten alles betalen van de doopdienst: de priester, de kleren, het eten etc. Deze keer waren Americo en Isa de peetouders (Americo en Isa zijn stafleden van het Inka-project: Isa is de kokkin en Americo is de Assistant Manager).

Tijdens het eten krijgen de peetouders veel meer dan alle andere gasten. Na het eten begint het dansen. Vrouwen mogen geen nee zeggen tegen mannen als ze ten dans worden gevraagd. Alle mannen vinden het blijkbaar erg leuk om met buitenlandse vrouwen te dansen, want alle vrouwelijke vrijwilligers waren bijna de hele tijd aan het dansen. Het dansen gaat meestal door tot een uur of twee 's nachts.

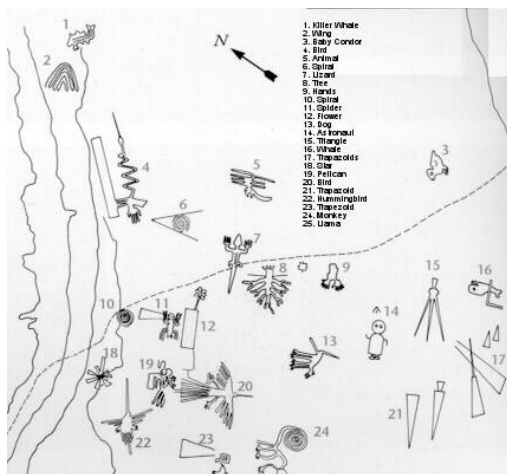


Het is echt heel bijzonder dat je een doopfeest meemaakt: de supervisors hadden tot nu toe nog maar 1 doopfeest meegemaakt. Wij hadden dus geluk dat we het mochten meemaken.

When arriving in Nazca by bus, it's hard to see what all the fuss is about. Nazca is a regular, medium-sized town with little of interest for the visitor. However, just a few miles out of town is the airport which organises short flights over the phenomenon that draws thousands of visitors each year and what has put Nazca firmly on the list of things to see whilst in Peru; the Nazca lines.



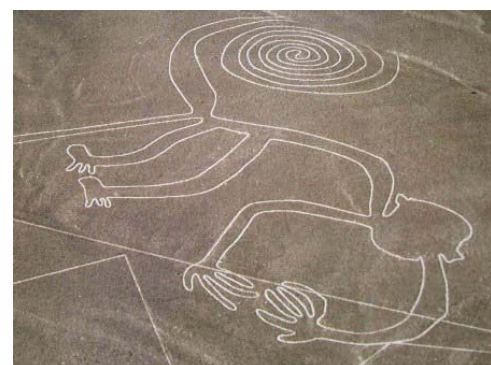
The Nazca lines are a series of geoglyphs located in the Nazca Desert ranging in complexity from simple lines to figures of hummingbirds, spiders, monkeys, fish and even what looks like a modern day astronaut! The collection of over 200 lines and figures are widely considered to be the best group of geoglyphs in the world.



The lines are shallow designs in the desert floor with a depth of 10-30 cms and the largest figures are over 200 metres long. They are largely believed to have been created by the Nazca culture between 200 BCE and 700 CE but the purpose of the lines is a matter of dispute between scholars and visitors alike.

Explanations of the meaning or purpose of the lines range from the sublime to the ridiculous. Many researchers ascribe religious significance to the lines – large enough for the gods to see from above; geometric lines indicating water sources; irrigation schemes; a giant astronomical calendar; intended to point to the places on the distant horizon where the sun and other celestial bodies rose or set and the list of potential explanations goes on. Swiss investigator, Erich von Däniken, even goes as far as suggesting the Nazca Lines are runways of an ancient airfield. However, this claim is not substantiated by any archaeological evidence!

Whatever your viewpoint, speculating over the origin and purpose of the lines is undoubtedly best done from the air and flying over the lines in the morning when visibility is at its best can't be recommended highly enough. It's advisable to go easy on breakfast as the plane tilts from side to side to ensure all passengers get a good view of the lines. Thoughtful of the pilot but not great for the weak-stomached!



If you're interested in learning more about the theories behind the Nazca lines whilst in Nazca, why not visit Viktoria Nikitzki who gives daily lectures on the lines at the Maria Reiche Centre, or go along to the nightly shows at the Planetarium in the Nazca Lines Hotel (visit http://www.concytec.gob.pe/ipa/planet_nasca.htm for more information).

Feliz Cumpleaños !!

Birthdays have filled
would like to wish a
the following staff and
celebrated their



the past month, so we
HUGE Happy Birthday to
volunteers who
birthdays in Peru...

- We would like to wish a happy birthday to our Social Manager Tess Okell who celebrated her 25th birthday on the 5th December.
- Happy birthday to Inca volunteer Norbert Kaehler who celebrated his birthday on the 12th December!
- Inca Project Supervisor, Americo Andrade also celebrated his birthday on 20th December.



Introducing....



Projects Abroad staff and volunteers would like to send best wishes and many congratulations to host parents Flor and Sven on the birth of their beautiful daughter Brianna, who was on 3rd December.

Cocina Peruana

This month's specialty is to compliment the *Lechon al Horno* from last month's newsletter...

How to make TAMALES...

Ingredients:

- ❖ 10 corn ears
- ❖ ½ kg chicken, cut in small 3cm pieces
- ❖ 50g toasted peanuts
- ❖ 12 black olives, seeded and cut in two
- ❖ 1 large onion, finely chopped
- ❖ 4 sundried yellow aji (chili)
- ❖ 3 hard boiled eggs, cut in pieces
- ❖ Salt & pepper to taste
- ❖ Aji (chilli) to taste
- ❖ Corn husks
- ❖ Salsa Criolla (Onion Creola sauce)



PREPARATION:

- Remove kernels from cob and process them.
- Seed and de-vein aji mirasol. Boil in water for 5 minutes. Discard water and blend with olive oil, until paste consistency.
- Melt 2 tablespoons shortening in a medium skillet and when hot, fry onion, garlic, aji mirasol paste and chicken pieces. Season with salt and pepper.
- Once chicken is golden, cover with water or chicken broth.
- Bring to a boil, and cook until chicken is tender.
- In a medium size skillet melt rest of shortening stirring constantly while adding the processed corn. Add chicken preparation and cook stirring until mixture is cooked and thickened.
- To make the tamale, place two overlapping corn husks in palm of one hand. Spoon 1 ½ tablespoon of corn mixture spreading slightly, Top with a piece of chicken, egg, peanut and olive. Cover with corn mixture. Wrap banana leaves or corn husks to enclose filling. Tie with string.
- Place tamales in a large pan and cook with little water for 1 hour. Serve with your piece of *lechón* and some typical *salsa criolla* (onion creole sauce).

Yields: 10 tamales