

Peru- Weaving Words and Women
April 24 - May 6, 2020
with Page Lambert and Brenda Porter

More Information

Overview

This trip is a rare opportunity to travel with other women writers, and to plumb the depths of personal experience from which all good writing arises. We will experience Peru through the lens of its women, and in particular, the women of the high Andes who have been crafting incredible hand-woven textiles for thousands of years. We will visit the small village of Patacancha, where women sit on the ground with their babies at their side and weave intricate, traditional designs on backstrap looms. We will visit the weaving collective of Chinchero, where grandmothers are passing on knowledge of natural, traditional dyes to the young girls. We will also weave in visits to the long-standing Incan ruins of Pisac, Pumamarca, and Machu Picchu, explore the cobblestone streets of several towns in the Sacred Valley, and take in the cathedrals and museums of Cusco, the heart of the Incan empire. Throughout our trip, Page will guide us with creative facilitation that will enable us to deepen our experiences, using written language and cultural narratives to expand our understanding of the Peruvian culture.

Peru

Peru is a rich and fascinating country, with a wide diversity of landscapes and peoples. Over 50% of the population is indigenous, carrying thousands of years of wisdom born from living closely with the land. While Spanish is the primary language, many other languages are spoken, including Quechua, the complex, unwritten language of the Incas that is the native, and often only, spoken language in the highlands we will be visiting. Harmony and *ayni*, the concept of reciprocity, and living in direct relationship with the earth are central aspects of the Quechua culture. The Quechua live a deeply spiritual life, blending Incan spirituality with the Catholic influence of the Spaniards and the earth-based rituals that are a result of living in direct relationship to the earth for thousands of years.

Your Guiding Team- Page, Brenda, and Laura

Page, Brenda, and Laura will work together as your team of leaders, and each has a different role. Page will weave the art of writing and aspects of the literary and feminine culture of Peru (both Quechua and Spanish) into the trip, offering guidance in how to creatively capture our experience in words during our creative time. Brenda, your True Nature Journeys guide, will take care of logistics and provide guidance and personal support as needed. Laura Tyson, founder of True Nature Journeys, will arrange pre-trip logistics and answer your pre-trip questions. On many days, local guides will provide the knowledge and perspective unique to native Peruvians. Our shared intention is to provide as many options as possible to accommodate the group's interests and individual needs.

Page Lambert, author of the memoir *In Search of Kinship*, and the historical novel *Shifting Stars*, is an advisor for the Rocky Mountain Land Library and a member of the International League of Conservation Writers. She has been writing about the western landscape and leading creative retreats for twenty-two years.

A founding member of Women Writing the West, her work has been nominated for two Pushcart Prizes. Her writing can be found inside monumental sculptures at the Denver Art Museum, online at *Huffington Post*, and inside the pages of dozens of anthologies. Recently published works include the essay “Not for Sale” (*Langscape Magazine*, 2018), “The Rural West” (*The Light Shines from the West*, Fulcrum Books, 2018), and “Deerstalking” (*Memoir Magazine*, Guns and People Issue, 2018).

Forthcoming works include essays and poems in *WAVES: A Confluence of Women's Voices* (Room of Her Own Foundation, 2019). A recipient of two Literary Fellowships from the Wyoming Arts Council, Page designs and teaches graduate writing courses for the University of Denver’s Professional Creative Writing Master’s Program. She writes the popular blog *All Things Literary/All Things Natural* from her mountain home west of Denver, Colorado.

Her upcoming adventures include the 2019 "Wyoming Literature & Landscape of the Horse Retreat," the 2019 Utah "River Writing & Sculpting Journey" on the Colorado River, the 2019 “Santa Fe & Taos Sojourn: Sacred Lands, Sacred Words, Sacred Art, and the 2020 "Peru: Weaving Words & Women" retreat through the Sacred Valley and the ruins of Machu Picchu.

Brenda Porter holds a degree in Biology Education and an MA in Nonprofit Management and has been guiding outdoor and international trips since 1994. Her love of world travel and cultures began with a high school cultural exchange in India. She has lived in a rural village in Honduras, worked in women’s community development as a Peace Corps Volunteer, and trekked throughout Central America, to Machu Picchu, and to the top of Kilimanjaro. She is an avid backpacker, yoga instructor, watercolor artist, gardener, and naturalist.

Level of Activity

This trip is designed for anyone in reasonable physical health, capable of walking at a relaxed pace for up to an hour at a time, and capable of walking on uneven terrain. To see Peru at ground-level requires walking, and we will walk on dirt roads, cobblestone streets, or trails for at least a little bit nearly everyday. The ruins at Machu Picchu and Pisac require an ability to walk on rough and uneven terrain, and to climb steep stone steps. However, there is no need for speed! We will walk at a slow and relaxing pace, take breaks as needed, and find options for less active participants whenever possible.

We will start our trip in Pisac, at an elevation of 9,000’. Most people adjust to this altitude just fine, aside from getting a little out of breath walking up hill. From there we will be going gradually down another 2,000’, over the course of eight or nine days, before we arrive at Machu Picchu. After that we will spend a few days in Cusco, at 11,000’, but by

then the increase in altitude will be barely noticeable. Before the trip we will send you suggestions for adapting to the altitude with ease.

If you are concerned about the physical aspect of the trip, contact Laura to get more information and to make sure that this is a good fit for you.

Food

Peruvian food is an eclectic blend of indigenous tradition and a strong Spanish influence. In the Andean region, fresh, locally grown root vegetables, green vegetables and corn are the staples for most meals, supplemented with grilled local chicken and meats. The gastronomically adventurous can try *cuy*, the grilled guinea pig that the region is famous for. We will sample a variety of cuisines at local restaurants, and one night will have a chef come to prepare us a traditional Peruvian dinner. Please let us know if you have food preferences or allergies- there are usually plenty of options, but if your diet is severely restricted you may need to bring some supplemental food. Vegetarians can be accommodated, although beans and legumes are not commonly seen in Peru so you may want to consider bringing a supplementary protein source.

Weather

Weather in the Andean highlands is similar to any mountain weather- hard to predict! April through October is considered the slightly colder but drier season in the Andean highlands. The average high in Cusco in April is in the sixties, with the overnight low in the forties, but much of our trip will be 2,000' below Cusco, so it will be significantly warmer. Pisac is 2000' lower than Cusco, and Machu Picchu is 4000' lower, so temperatures for most of our trip will likely be pleasantly warm during the day and cool at night. We'll provide you with a suggested clothing list that will give you a good range of adaptability to the mountain climate.

Logistical Details

Cost

The cost is \$4,200, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, there is an additional supplement of \$750. We will take a maximum of 12 people. This cost does not cover airfare (see below).

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 is due with registration, \$1850 due Sept. 1, 2019, and \$1850 due Jan. 15, 2020. Please read the registration form carefully so that you understand the cancellation policy.

What's Included

Everything that you'll need during your stay in Peru is included in the trip price, except for bottled drinking water. This includes three meals a day, lodging, all fees for the activities, and ground transportation within the country. You will want to bring some extra money to purchase bottled drinking water, and in case you want special snacks, alcoholic drinks, gifts and souvenirs, or if you think you may get a wild idea to do something extra that's not in the plans.

Air Transportation

More information about how and when to book internal flights will be sent after you register, but this will give you an overview of what to expect. Be sure to wait to book your flights until we have confirmed that the trip has the minimum number of people required. Laura will be available to help you with your flight arrangements if needed. Please note that airfare to Lima and Cusco is NOT included in the trip price. Flights from Denver to Lima are typically between \$600 and \$800. You can expect another \$200-300 for the round-trip flight from Lima to Cusco

Most flights from the United States arrive at night, and transportation will be pre-arranged to bring you to the hotel. On the night of April 24, you will meet and spend the night in Lima at a small guesthouse in a quiet neighborhood. You will then leave first thing the next morning, taking pre-arranged transportation, for an hour and a half flight to Cusco. Page will travel with the group from Lima to Cusco, and your True Nature Journeys guide will meet you when you arrive in Cusco.

Most return flights to the US leave in the afternoon or evening, meaning that it is easy to leave Cusco on the morning of May 6, and then connect to your return flight in Lima. Note that it is possible that you will need to take an overnight flight from Lima, arriving home on May 7. If you want to stay an extra night in Lima, we can help you to arrange this.

Accommodations

Accommodations are selected to be clean, comfortable, locally owned, and congruent with the down-to-earth nature of the country. Our plan is to stay at the following locations. It is possible that these may change, depending on availability.

Lima: Casabella Miraflores	www.casabellaperu.net/miraflores/
Pisac: Paz y Luz	www.pazyluzperu.com
Ollantaytambo: Apu Lodge	www.apulodge.com
Agua Callientes: Terrazas del Inca	http://www.terrazasdelinca.com
Cusco: Casa San Blas	www.casasanblas.com

What to Bring

We'll send a list of suggested clothing after you register. No need for fancy clothes- just comfortable ones and good walking shoes.

*****Remember that you will need a current passport!*****

Please feel free to contact either of us by phone or email if you have any questions!

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