

Hi Miles,

Sorry for the delay..we did travel for most of July. In summary, the trip exceeded our expectations. Three factors—our guide Ronald, the overall level of service, and the landscapes—natural and cultural—accounted for our satisfaction.

Ronald is wonderfully knowledgeable and engaged. In retrospect, it's hard to believe the journey would have been as interesting with another guide. As interesting as his perspectives on the natural and cultural history of the area were his own history and adventures in the area—they provided us with special insights... He was also superb at managing logistics— e.g., securing our tram tickets at Kuelap so that we could ride up with almost no wait. He was wonderfully attuned to sustainability and environmental issues, as well.

We were also happy with the vehicles provided—they were very comfortable and generally made travel over the curvy and sometimes rough roads reasonably comfortable. The Spanish-speaking driver who accompanied us the last two days and a very nice guys, and a very good driver as well.

Our one complaint was the length of the travel day, combined with the character of the Leymebamba road on our first day. We understand this was a function of the availability of the Gocta lodge, but we recommend that in the future you consider an overnight stop at one of the locations that can be reached before dark. We were very tired and also carsick by the time we got there—about 7 hrs travel I think!

Casa Malqui was very nice. We loved the location and the service—also met some interesting Japanese travelers there. The museum was very interesting, and the coffee shop on the other side of the road was great.

Gocta was fine as well..the food was particularly good.

La Xalca in Chachapoyas was also a very comfortable place, with a very good breakfast. However, our room at the front of the hotel was too noisy....I don't think any others were available.

The hiking would have been perfect—but I was coming down with pneumonia, though I didn't know it—it was diagnosed upon my return. We especially liked the walk to Revash—spectacular scenery, a very good trail (it was dry that day) and a wonderful site. Ronald also knew a señora who lived along the walk—it was very interesting to talk to her. The local ladies who made us lunch were also very friendly and tried very hard.

We think Revash was our favorite day, largely because of the great weather and absence of other tourists. Kuelap was intriguing as well...we think it would be good to advise visitors of the restoration work still happening at the main gate—it was a bit disappointing not to be able to see the entryway in all its glory, though certainly not your responsibility. Photo above is the road from Revash back toward Leymebamba.





Kuelap in perfect mist without anyone else in the picture—wonderful!
That said, other parts of the Kuelap site were fascinating, and made for wonderful photos.

Karajia was the last site we saw—a bit underwhelming, with many other tourists and lots of mud, plus a somewhat burned-out local guide. These factors are all related to timing and other factors beyond your control. Maybe depart 20 or 30 minutes earlier from Gocta to miss the other tourists?

Our favorite restaurant was the one in Chachapoyas—we loved the atmosphere and food, and were surprised to encounter such a nice place in the town...

We would (and have) recommend the trip to anyone who had the time and the stamina!

Best,

Andrew and Maureen