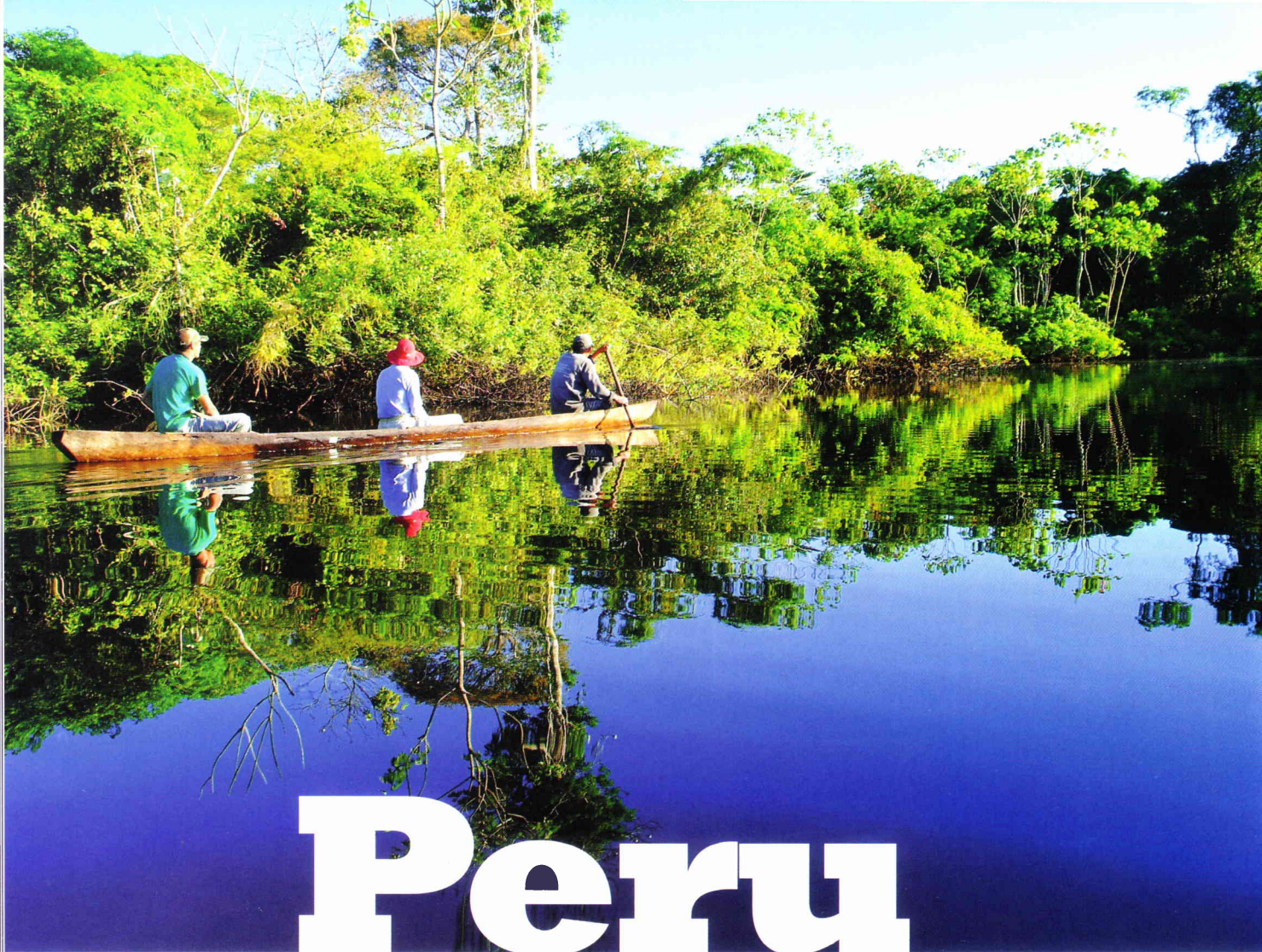


●●● IN
CELEBRATION
●●● OF ●●●

ultimate escapes



THE POSER: DESIGN A DREAM HOLIDAY EXCLUSIVELY FOR **THE PEAK**
SELECTIONS: GOURMET & TRAVEL READERS. IT HAS TO BE ONE-OF-A-
KIND AND EXTRAORDINARY. THAT WAS OUR BRIEF TO BESPOKE LUXURY
TRAVEL PLANNERS. HERE'S WHAT THEY'VE COME UP WITH.



For the urbane sophisticate

A bespoke gourmet adventure has been designed by Urbane Nomads, a Singapore-based luxury tour company. "This 12-day trip will highlight Peru's sophisticated gastronomy, include a tour of Lima with a specialist guide, cocktails in a museum normally closed to the public, as well as a tour of Machu Picchu accompanied by a British explorer," says Hajar Ali, founder of Urbane Nomads. Also included is a cruise down the Amazon River, which, she adds, few ever experience and is something that will appeal to the adventurous, cultured traveller.



Most tourists see Lima only as a stopover en route to Machu Picchu and other parts of Peru, which is a shame considering it offers some of the finest gastronomic delights in the world. You will be staying in

what is perhaps Lima's best hotel, the Miraflores Park Hotel. Its central location is great for exploration on your own. For dinner, Huaca Pucllana, an outstanding restaurant set against Incan structures, is highly recommended.

Foodies can consider taking a morning cooking class that will involve visiting a local market, where a colourful array of ingredients can be picked out. The lesson will introduce you to ceviches and local tapas and end with a feast of what you've whipped up. Then, a specialist guide will take you to the colonial area of Lima, home to beautiful Baroque-style buildings and the Universidad de San Marcos (the oldest university in the Americas and one of the oldest in the world).

For those interested in the culture and history of Peru, a lecture by Ulla Holmquist, a specialist on pre-Incan cultures and a former curator of the Museo de Arte de Lima, can be arranged. Later, you'll

stop for cocktails at Casa Aliaga, "museum" that is not usually open to the public. It's a magnificent house owned by a family for 17 generations with the salons representative of the aesthetic styles of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Dinner will be at Astrid y Gaston, helmed by Peruvian celebrity chef Gaston Acurio, who has opened an eponymous chain of restaurants in several other cities around the world.

From Lima, catch a flight to Iquitos and after a scenic one-and-a-half-hour drive through the countryside, you'll be at the village of Nauta boarding the elegant M/V Aqua. Over the next four days, relax as you sail through various tributaries of the Amazon, discovering one of its less explored frontiers.

Food is always a highlight and your first dinner on the ship will help you understand Peru's reputation as a gourmet haven. The luxury vessel's executive chef Pedro M



Schiaffino also owns the renowned Malabar and La Pescaderia restaurants in Lima and has collaborated with multi-Michelin-star chef Nobu Matsuhisa. The latter, having spent much time in Lima, credits the city for shaping the style that Nobu has today. Schiaffino is well known for fusing Peruvian and Amazonian cuisines.

The next few days will be unlike any experience you have had with nature and wildlife. Explore the blackwater Tahuayo River and Yacapana (Iguana) Islands on board a comfortable skiff boat while being greeted by an abundance of wildlife like orioles, black-collared hawks and sloths. You'll also witness one of the greatest spectacles of the southern hemisphere – the birthplace of the Amazon River, a dynamic confluence of two major tributaries, the Ucayali and the Marañon.

After wildlife, it's time to soak in the cultural attractions and Cusco is the heart of it. Start

at the Santo Domingo convent monastery that was previously the Koricancha temple, one of the most important temples for sun worship. Then move on to the countryside, visiting Incan ruins, the temple and amphitheatre of Keno and the red fortress of Puca Pucara.

Lunch is at Map Cafe, one of Cusco's most stylish and elegant restaurants located in the courtyard of the Museo de Arte Precolombino, where Andean nouvelle cuisine is served. From Cusco, make a day trip to the Urubamba or Sacred Valley to visit colourful Andean markets and remarkable Incan ruins.

The following day, try Peruvian coffee before boarding the luxury Orient Express Hiram Bingham train service to Machu Picchu. During this approximately three-hour ride, a brunch of local dishes will be served amid the ever-changing and spectacular scenery of the Andes.

You will arrive at the Lost City of

the Incas and transfer to the Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge Hotel. It's the only hotel located adjacent to Machu Picchu, enabling you to be the first or the last one on site. British explorer, Peter Frost, will guide you through, distinguishing your experience of Machu Picchu from other travellers.

Before returning to Cusco, enjoy a free day in Machu Picchu. Dinner on the train will feature a menu of seafood, local produce, meats and tantalising desserts while entertainment will be provided by Peruvian dancers and musicians.

When you're back in Lima, enjoy an intriguing dinner at Brujas de Cachiche (Witches of Cachiche), one of the few restaurants to focus on Peruvian pre-Columbian cultures. Some of the dishes served are prepared using ancient recipes. Nestled in an old mansion in a residential neighbourhood, this cult restaurant has a queue that starts forming at around 5pm.

COST OF THE TRIP

Between US\$7,500 (S\$9,800) and US\$8,000 per person. Prices may vary depending on travel dates and other specific requests.

This page: Have drinks in the luxurious confines of the Orient Express Hiram Bingham's bar while taking in magnificent views of the Andes. **Opposite page:** Peru's untamed wildlife and vistas await visitors. **Previous page:** The Machu Picchu ruins are Peru's most-visited site.