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<http://www.limagourmetcompany.com>



Lucas

We set off for lunch in the center of Lima at one of the famous chef, Gaston Acurio's restaurants, Tanta, to try a mixture of Peruvian dishes and fruit juices. Unfortunately there was a demonstration going on at the Plaza San Martin, and our van was not allowed anywhere near the restaurant. We had to hike many blocks, at times in the middle of demonstrators, to the restaurant.

When we got to the restaurant we were treated to a Pisco sour, which is made of Peruvian brandy, lemon or lime juice, egg white and sugar. It was just the thing we needed after our ordeal.

We were served some typical Peruvian dishes:

Anticuchos are skewers consisting of small pieces of grilled meat that are marinated in lime juice, vinegar and spices like aji (Peruvian chili peppers), cumin and pepper. The most traditional and for locals most popular Anticuchos are made of beef heart slices. We were not told what kind of meat it was, but Kathy's family owned a grocery store and she knew exactly what it was immediately!

Our host was astounded as Kathy was the first person on any tour that identified the cut of beef.

Ceviche is the most popular dish in Peru and the pride of all Peruvians. While there are hundreds of variations, the traditional Ceviche actually just needs 5 simple ingredients: fresh, raw, white fish filet cut into bite-size pieces, marinated and "cooked" in lime juice and seasoned with Peruvian chili peppers, onions and salt.

Papa Rellena is a traditional croquette filled with a spicy ground beef mixture. Ground beef is stir-fried with onions, tomatoes, garlic, cumin, and paprika. Mashed potatoes are then molded around a center of the meat mixture and formed to resemble a potato.

Causa is a combination of the ancient potato, avocado and aji amarillo (yellow chile pepper)

We also were served green tamale and cheese and yucca balls

Top left: green tamale (made with cilantro)

Top right: causa (potato, mayonnaise, avocado, and chicken)

Bottom right: cheese and yucca balls

Bottom middle: Anticuchos (sliced beef heart topped with chili sauce)

Bottom left: Papa Rellena (potato stuffed with beef)





The ceviche was excellent with delicious Cuzco corn. We finished the lunch with a flan (custard) made with passion fruit-everything was delicious!
After lunch we toured the Casa de Gastronomía, a wonderful culinary museum dedicated to the evolution of Peruvian cuisine.



The most interesting painting in the museum was of the Last Supper, with a cui (guinea pig) in the center of the table instead of a fish!
From there we toured of the center of Lima to see the Lima Cathedral, Church of San Francisco, Plaza de Armas, Presidential Palace, Municipal building among many other historical points located in the area. There was also another demonstration near the Plaza de Armas, but the demonstrators were kept behind steel gates manned by police. Because the demonstrators were kept away from the Plaza de Armas, we had it almost to ourselves.



From the museum we walked past the National Library to the church of San Francisco (St. Francis)



In the church of San Francisco, we went on a tour of the catacombs. I knew about the ones in Rome and Paris, but had never seen them. We were taken down a series of passages, and there was a walkway next to a series of pits. Each pit was about half filled with femurs (upper leg bones) arranged in rows. There were many passages with pits full of bones. Right before the end of the tour, we were shown a pit with femurs and skulls arranged a geometric design! Kathy was glad she chose not to go, as closed up spaces full of human bones is not her idea of fun and entertainment.



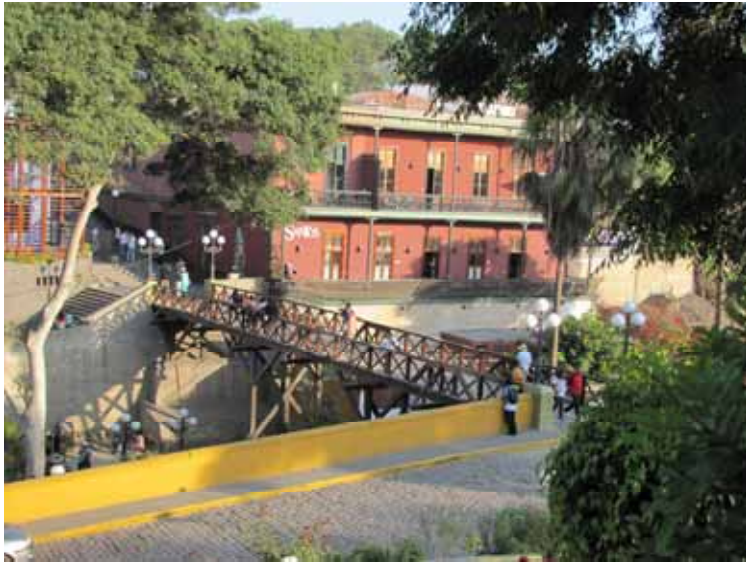
After that experience we really needed light and fresh air, so we were driven along cliffs of the Miraflores district, overlooking the Pacific. The view of the ocean was great, and a real oddity was pointed out .



There is a shopping mall built down from the top of the cliff! The entrances are at street level, and you go down to the various floors.

We then went to the bohemian district of Barranco, where we stopped at a small restaurant and enjoyed a special drink made from the fruit of a Lucuma tree in the patio. Lucuma fruit has a unique flavor of maple and sweet potato. This is something that could not happen if you had a busload of 40 people. We then toured Barranco to see the Bridge of Sighs and colonial architecture and streets of the district. There is a legend about this bridge, that if you can hold hands and walk across the bridge holding your breath, you will have eternal love. Well, we did it, and since we kissed under the Bridge of Sighs in Venice in a gondola, this should doubly guarantee it.

We also stopped at a cantina to hear some local musicians.



From Barranco we went back to Miraflores to have a tapas-style dinner within a pre-Incan archeological complex, the Huaca Pucllana, to try a few more traditional dishes and Peruvian desserts.

The Archeological Complex "Huaca Pucllana" was an Administrative and Ceremonial Center of the Lima Culture, a society that developed on the Peruvian Central Coast between 200 AD and 700 AD. Located in today's district of Miraflores the "Huaca Pucllana" was built around 500 AD. and is one of the most important ancient monuments in Lima. It is made of adobe, and has survived because it never rains in Lima.



Here is a picture of our tapas dinner along with the description of the dishes.

Top: ceviche

Right: grilled octopus with cocktail potatoes

Bottom: breaded crab claw

Left: parmesan scallops

Bowl: mango salsa



After a couple more Pisco sours, we don't remember the names of the four desserts, but they were delicious.

