



Dear Leapers,

Introducing the newsletter is always a good opportunity to step back and ponder responsible tourism in a wider sense. While we don't have local guides in Haiti, the disaster was a reminder of the fragility of many developing countries. Recently Peru suffered rains which resulted in mud slides that caused enormous disruption to Machu Picchu, leaving some tourists to be rescued with helicopters. While immediate help relies on specialists, the long term recovery is often entwined with the need to attract tourists back to affected regions. Already we have heard from worried locals that tourism is down by 80%. A concern especially when there are so many activities tourists can enjoy in Peru outside of Machu Picchu.

This edition of the newsletter includes our announcement of our second competition to reward good local guides and services directly, and our new competition to invite local stories from travel writers. Join up to our Leap Local fanpage on facebook or twitter to receive updates on prizes, judges etc. Other articles include Kirsten's answer to whether a tour is really responsible, and she reminds us of the opportunity to think about some of the locals we've met on our travels even once we've returned back home. Courtney shares her experiences with her local guide Paulino. When you are planning your next adventure this summer, think about going local and entering your local guide and/or yourself into our competitions. We'd love to hear about local travel experiences that deserve to be shared.

Travel safe,

From Liles

Co-founder of Leap Local



Photo by: Kirsten Koza

The Search Continues!

With the launch of the new Leap Local competitions at the beginning of 2010, we not only continue our quest to find the best local tourist guides and services across the globe, but we are also introducing a travel writing competition in celebration of tourists who go local when they travel, or wish they had used a local expert, and have a story to tell.

The Competition for Local Guides and Services will build on the success of our last competition which saw prizes being awarded directly to winning guides in Peru, Fiji, Easter Island, the Philippines and India. Mario, Saul, Tevita, Arnel, Santhosh and the Pakarati family were all delighted with the support for their businesses and resulting promotional opportunities. We are also introducing a new Leap Local Travel Writer Competition to offer prizes to travellers with hilarious, surprising and life changing local travel stories which involve locals. Prizes will be awarded to the most passionate and inspirational stories of local travel. This is in recognition of the crucial part these travellers play when they write reviews and spread the word about great local guides. Join Leap Local's fanpage on Facebook or follow us on Twitter for updates, and see our website for full competition details.

Independent recommenders of local travel who offer objective, fresh and knowledgeable insights about guides are essential to the promotion of organic travel experiences. These individuals comprise a circle of influence with a massive potential to make local travel more accessible, and this accessibility is vital for the continued evolution and growth of travel with more responsible goals.

We frequently receive emails from people using our website who are looking for suggested itineraries. We can't all be experts in the best travel plan for each country we are visiting, especially when this relates to very remote or less travelled parts of the world. Getting advice from a fellow traveller who has firsthand experience can be invaluable. This often makes the difference when less experienced travellers are considering whether to try more local guides and services. As good as a local guide may be, finding new customers is very challenging without support from previous happy travellers. Leap Local aims to close this loop.

We are inviting approaches from like-minded partners and sponsors who understand the value of supporting travel that benefits local communities. So, if you want to be associated with an organisation at the heart of the 'going local' movement, please email nicky@leaplocal.org

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facebook

Follow us on twitter



Last year's competition generated vibrant media coverage

Last year we received full-spread coverage in both the Guardian in the UK and The Globe & Mail in Canada, plus were ranked the 15th best travel website in the world by the Independent. Our press releases and the information we provided to international newspapers about the competition made front page of the Fiji Times and was given full article coverage in the travel section of English language newspapers such as Living in Peru, The National (Abu Dhabi), magazines including Kerala Tourism Magazine, and was translated for foreign media such as Arequipa Info. Additional online coverage was generated by competition partners including Make Travel Fair, Green Traveller, and Your Safe Planet (now TripBod).

What are the benefits for our partners and sponsors?

1. Help to make a real and tangible difference to local guides and their communities in developing countries
2. Demonstrate your support for responsible tourism as it rises up the consumer agenda
3. Leverage a partnership with Leap Local to help meet your corporate social responsibility objectives
4. Generate positive PR about your organisation - the last competition generated positive media coverage in national, local and foreign press

Meet some of our recently added locals...

Be inspired, get active, and remember to recommend any good local guides you use when you go travelling. That way other travellers can find them too!



Name: **Sonam Narbu**
Location: East Bhutan
Country: Bhutan
Speaks: English
Services: Tours
Recommended by: Hannah Gilbert

LOCAL
recommended guides



Name: **Gerson Pizango**
Location: Iquitos
Country: Peru
Speaks: English, Spanish
Services: Tours, accommodation, food
Recommended by: Jules Lapprand

LOCAL
recommended guides



Name: **Mr Lucky**
Location: Siem Reap
Country: Cambodia
Speaks: English, Khmer
Services: Tours
Recommended by: James Hudson

LOCAL
recommended guides



Name: **Aly Amaut Ponce de Leon**
Location: Cusco
Country: Peru
Speaks: English, Spanish
Services: Inca Trail, Tours, Culture, Sport
Recommended by: Josef Seyward

LOCAL
recommended guides

First Contact and an ongoing Local Connection

By Kirsten Koza

(Photographs: Kirsten Koza)

I felt guilty serving maple syrup soaked pancakes to the children of Chitapampa, Peru. Canada shouldn't really be sharing tooth decay with a village without a dentist.

So, Dr. Bross, a dentist in my hometown gave me a box of toothbrushes, toothpaste and floss. Mother Earth Tours, in Cusco, has found a dentist to accompany these supplies to the school. It made me wonder what else was available.

I approached Sutton Public School in Canada, about an exchange – I had no idea how huge the reactions would be.

Although the Peruvian and Canadian students don't seem to have anything in common, Steve Young the principal at Sutton pointed out a

common denominator. Sutton is rated a P+ school - meaning it's considered a poor school based upon factors such as parental incomes. Wow.

Steve Young seized the project with a limitless vision of where this partnership could go.

He said, "The Social Studies curriculum indicates that students need to learn about 'Canada and the role of citizens in a democratic society within a culturally diverse and independent world'. I cannot think of a better vehicle to do this than through an on-going exchange with a school of similar circumstances in a country like Peru."

Sutton Public will be getting fresh supplies this fall when they move into their new building. Greg Jaski, the eco club teacher was delighted with the idea of donating equipment to Peru, that would otherwise end up in landfill sites.

First contact will be something simple like handwritten postcards and Sutton looks forward to hosting Aly from Mother Earth in the future. We hope he likes ice fishing.



Chitapampa is treated to a Canadian breakfast



The students of Chitapampa have much to offer in their exchange with Sutton Public School in Canada



A classroom at the school in Chitapampa, Peru



Dr. Bross's team in Canada box-up dental supplies to send to Peru



Principal, Steve Young, of Sutton Public School in Canada

A Home Away From Home - Chinchero, Peru

By Courtney Leake

(Photographs: Courtney Leake)

On arrival in Chinchero my university group and I were thrown into a whirlwind of festivities. We ate, danced and drank as we joined in a local celebration that takes place every year. I'll never forget my first taste of guinea pig, or 'cuy' – a must-do in Peru! But what I'll remember the most about our stay is the warmth of Paulino and his family. Miles from anywhere familiar and un-acclimatised to the 3,700m altitude, I couldn't have felt more at home.

Paulino is a loving family member, a community leader and a great local guide. He welcomed us into his home, and embraced us as part of his family. He has four lovely children with his wife Vilma, whose smile lights up the room. Faustina, Vilma's mother, keeps the local traditions alive with native Quechua dress and dialect. There is a real closeness in this family, and it was a pleasure to see such love and tenderness across the generations.

Every day was filled with new experiences, from practicing the art of traditional Peruvian weaving to touring around the Moray ruins and Salineras salt mines. Paulino's knowledge is impressive. We drove to Umasbamba and soaked up spectacular views of dramatic peaks and golden fields. Umasbamba, a small town near Chinchero, seeks to bring in tourism as a source of revenue. Here we worked in the potato fields to help create a potential model for the community.

We were completely immersed in Peruvian culture, and although we were miles from home we felt like we belonged. Paulino and his family gave us a unique experience that you wouldn't find along the well trodden 'gringo trail.' We really had seen, learnt about and lived the real Peru.



Dancing in the ruins



Dinner!



The family and me (falta Franklin)



Paulino explaining how to wash, dye, spin, and weave the wool

But is it?...is it Really Responsible, Really?

By Kirsten Koza

(Photographs: Kirsten Koza)

An ad for a "responsible fishing tour" caught my eye. Apparently, the irresponsible fishing tour is the one where you actually eat the fish that you catch.

My inbox is filling with responsible tourism ads that aren't even trying to disguise that they have nothing to do with responsible tourism.

And now there is another responsible tourism gimmick popping up. It is called "voluntourism".

Just before I departed for my latest trip to Peru, I was contacted by a Voluntourism rep from Goliger's TravelPlus in Canada. They wanted me to test-drive their new partnership with a local Cusco company, Mother Earth Tours.

My initial reaction was, "no". I'm hardcore go local and Goliger's is an overseas operator. However, for these initiatives Goliger's is staking their name behind locals. Goliger's has quite the name too - National Geographic Adventure rated them the "best adventure travel company" in 2009.

I've often thought that fear holds some travellers back from using local guides and services. Goliger's provides a safety net for those individuals. The actual tour however is lead by Aly Amaut Ponce de Leon and his team of locals.

But what is in this for Goliger's? Is it really a partnership? I decided to scope it out for 3-days of my 3-week trip.

Corinne from Goliger's and Aly met me at Apu Lodge in Ollantaytambo. We toured the nearby ruins and within minutes I knew why Goliger's selected Aly from among the many excellent guides - Aly is in love with Peru. His bag of coca over-flow-eth. He's a startling contrast to the guide I had on a previous trip - a woman who managed to send me into a boredom induced coma with the exciting history of the Incas.

Later that afternoon the team from Mother Earth served us a delicious alfresco multi-course feast, featuring such local delights as pickled pig skin salad! I spied the chef quietly giving a hearty bowl of soup to an impoverished elderly woman and I knew why Aly had hired his local team.

The third day was Voluntourism. We visited a rural school in Chitapampa, served a Canadian breakfast to the community and delivered some basic school supplies. A tourist would have no reason on the planet for visiting Chitapampa. It's dismal. I went through a mix of emotions including anger, and frustration.

When I returned to Canada I looked at my photos and saw smiles on the faces of Chitapampa - abject poverty and still smiling. Then something happened. It was like the moment when the Grinch's heart grows three sizes. I contacted Sutton Public School, in Canada. They're moving to a brand new building and will be getting new equipment. The principal realized immediately that they have something to give to Chitapampa, but also something to gain - a sense of appreciation for what we have at this moment.

What's in it for Goliger's? They certainly aren't making big profits. The truth might be that the cause and effect of making these positive global connections makes Goliger's smile too.

Kirsten Koza is a Canadian adventure travel writer and author. You can see pictures from this trip and others at www.kirstenkoza.com

 Printed on 100% recycled paper



Aly of Mother Earth Tours and Corinne from Goliger's TravelPlus, Ollantaytambo, Peru



Mother Earth serves up local dishes such as pickled pig skin salad. The guinea pig was better..



The Chitapampa smile

If you'd like to write for the newsletter, we'd love to hear from you. Many locals around the world need tourists to share their experiences with other travellers - whether it be about scallop diving or weaving in Peru, to Mongolian homestays, or learning to blow blow-darts in Borneo or the Amazon, or even learning to mush a dogsled in the Arctic - we want to hear your local travel story.

We are always interested in your views on Leap, our newsletter and our website so welcome all your ideas and feedback. If you want to get in touch please go to the 'contact us' section of our website. And for the more experienced travellers amongst you, we are always looking for people to help expand Leap Local to other developing countries. If you come across a local guide or service why not recommend them to another traveller through our website? And if the travel writer in you is waiting to get out, feel free to submit some 'How to go Local' guides.

Get involved - remember, your holiday is their livelihood!



www.leaplocal.org