

1/22/07 Days 8 and 9 – Lima, Peru: We docked in the port of Callao (pronounced Ki-yow) before dawn on Monday.

First of all, a note to any reader who may post a comment on this blog. The Amsterdam Internet system has a very tight and efficient filter system to prevent any viewing of pornography from the Internet. Unfortunately their definition of risky websites includes our blog URL. After negotiating a few days we were able to get the blog cleared to the point that we can now see the text but no pictures or comments from readers are visible. Consequently, we are asking any readers who have posted comments to please understand why we don't reply on the website.

Back to Lima. The city of Callao where we are docked is a commercial and military port and suburb of the nearby capital city of Lima. Here are a couple pictures to illustrate the busy maritime activity.



Navy ships are tied up across the water from commercial ships in the second picture and the flat, low rise city of Lima is shown in the background of both.

We took a guided bus tour from the ship that included the old colonial part of Lima and the new high-rent district. On the way in to Lima we passed by gas stations with prices posted in the range of \$3 USD per gallon for regular and \$5 per gallon for high octane. In spite of the relatively high gasoline prices there were plenty of cars jamming the streets.

It was difficult to say the city is beautiful but it has a sedate charm. We walked around the old part of town surrounding the Plaza Major. We saw the presidential palace, Catholic Cathedral and toured the Old Catholic convent. Our guide emphasized that it hardly ever rains in Lima and most of the old buildings are made of adobe mud and wood which holds up quite well in the dry climate. For example, many of the balconies hanging over the sidewalks are made of cedar wood brought in by boat from Central America. Here are some photos:



Plaza Major with statue of San Martin, the liberator of Peru, and the Presidential Palace in the background.



More Plaza Major



Catholic Cathedral with tourists milling about.

The guide told us there were some demonstrations going on today in parts of the city. The demonstrations were apparently driven by workers demanding higher pay. We didn't see the demonstrations but there was an abundance of uniformed police/military people and vehicles in the vicinity to maintain order. The police were polite and in general ignored us tourists.



Here are some police vehicles and military men with, Carmen, our guide (black pants, white shirt, and pony tail) telling us to try and look like innocent American tourists.



After the tour of the colonial section of Lima we boarded the bus and drove through some more upscale sections. We went through the San Isidro and Miraflores communities. There was new concrete construction and nice looking parks in these suburbs. Most of Lima's buildings are less than 3 or 4 stories tall because of the fact that this is an active seismic area. However, with modern construction methods and materials apparently they have been able to go to high rise buildings.

The photo on the right is an example of a nice looking building. Several of the high rise apartment/business buildings had colorful flower beds outside the windows.

The bus brought us back to the ship by way of a drive along the Pacific Ocean. The appearance of the eroded cliffs and surf along the beaches reminded us of similar settings along the coast of Southern California. At the ship we found that local craft vendors had set up shop on the pier and as proper tourists we were automatically drawn in.





Oh yes, we got a photo of Barbara's Oak Ridge Library card in Lima Peru!



While shopping on the pier we ran across the folks who occupy the stateroom next to ours. We used the opportunity to get better acquainted with Carl and Trudy Deremo. Trudy showed us what a good deal she got on an alpaca wool blanket and it was obvious we were kindred souls when it comes to shopping. Here is a photo of Trudy and Barbara.

Toward evening flocks of seagulls descended on the pier area around the ship. Some settled down on the pier and others were flying around in swarms. We had been told that guano (bird dropping fertilizer) is a significant product of the nearby Peruvian islands and from the number of birds we saw this claim could be true.

Since we were docked overnight it was possible to bring onboard some local folk dance teams to perform in the after-dinner show. The Peruvian Folkloric Show that they put on was wonderful. In addition to the dance routines that were entertaining, the costumes were spectacular in color and style. Here are some pictures taken during the show.





They got a standing ovation!



On Tuesday morning, our second day in Lima, we discovered that whoever closed our stateroom safe last night punched in an unknown PIN number and we couldn't open it this morning. Luckily such screw-up's are anticipated. Soon an electronic safe cracker was located and the safe was opened. Barbara felt much relieved in knowing that cash was now available to lubricate our morning tour to the Lima shopping district. The two days in Lima were scheduled to allow the passengers who left the ship in Manta, Ecuador, to visit the Inca site at Manchu Pichu and then return to the ship docked at Callao, near Lima.

This seems like a good time to mention that our stateroom attendant, Bayu, has been taking good care of us. As a little something extra he makes fanciful animals out of rolled up bath towels and leaves them on the bed for us to discover when we come in. Here is Bayu holding his latest creation in the form of a turtle.



We took a tour of the Lima native handcraft shopping center today. We boarded our bus at 9am and it took about 45 minutes to get to the shopping center. We bought mostly souvenir type things like tee shirts and Peruvian dolls but Barbara did find a nice silver and carved gourd pendant and ear ring set with a Peruvian artistic touch to it.

We returned to the ship about 2pm. At 6pm we got underway for Easter Island. There will be several days at sea and we always enjoy that quiet time.