OSU “ANDES ADVENTURE” in PERÚ & BOLIVIA
DECEMBER 27, 2019 – JANUARY 11, 2020
Contact: Dr. Tom Kuzmic, OSU NREM Department, 015 Agricultural Hall  thomas.kuzmic@okstate.edu

DAY 1 – Friday, Dec. 27 We depart our home airports two days after Christmas and fly to Dallas-Fort-Worth, and then overnight to Lima, Perú.

DAY 2 – Saturday, Dec. 28: We'll pass through Perú Immigration and Customs in Lima, and then fly to Cusco, the historic center of Inca culture in the Andean highlands at 11,150 feet elevation, now a bustling city that has retained its authentic character. After meeting our guide, checking in at our hotel, and enjoying a nice lunch, we'll stroll around the central Plaza de Armas and tour its grand cathedral, admire the remains of Qorikancha, the Inca Sun Temple, and begin to acclimate to the thin air as we settle in for our “Andes Adventure” in South America.

DAY 3 – Sunday, Dec. 29: After breakfast, we'll drive to the majestic Inca agricultural terraces at Pisac with some great Andes scenery along the way. Then back towards Cusco, we will tour Sacsayhuamán, the remains of an imposing Inca fortress situated on the heights above the city. The splendid Inca stone masonry here constructed with massive hand-carved blocks of rock is astounding. Nearby we'll also visit the Inca sites of Tambo Machay, Puca Pukara and Q'enko. We’ll lodge again tonight in Cusco.

DAY 4 – Monday, Dec. 30: We depart Cusco and head to Chinchero a quaint town built upon remnant Inca walls. Here we’ll have a memorable experience at a traditional weaving center where local women demonstrate their craft and sell beautiful alpaca sweaters, scarves, blankets, and coveted Andean hats. After lunch at a nearby hacienda, we’ll visit Salineras, an expanse of evaporation salt terraces that have been in use for hundreds of years and still provide most of the salt used today by the people of Perú. Afterwards we’ll examine the restored Inca site of Moray, a set of concentric agricultural terraces that in essence served as an Inca agricultural experiment station with several microclimates. Then we’ll head to our evening lodging at Ollantaytambo.

DAY 5 – Tuesday, Dec. 31: This morning we’ll climb the rock stairways and terraces of Ollantaytambo, a dramatic Inca temple and fortress, and we’ll hike up to the Inca colcas or warehouses perched on the steep mountainside across the valley. We’ll also visit a traditional Inca kancha townsit still in use today. After lunch, we’ll board the Vistadome train for a relaxing journey down the scenic Urubamba River valley to Aguas Calientes situated in the cloud forest at 8000 feet beneath Machu Picchu, the fabled "lost city of the Inca,” and our quest for tomorrow! We’ll lodge in a riverside hotel, have a delicious gourmet dinner, and shop at the crafts market.

DAY 6 – Wednesday, Jan. 1: Sunrise at Machu Picchu…what a way to start a "Happy New Year"! We will experience the legendary "lost city" and wander among its regal residences, temples, and plazas while we wonder about the industrious Inca. Their stone masonry was meticulous and is virtually still intact, as the Spanish never found Machu Picchu during their 1500s Conquest. We’ll gaze at the enigmatic Intihuatana stone, the Royal Tomb, Sacred Rock, and the Temples of the Sun, the Condor, and the Three Windows, and speculate about life in Machu Picchu during its zenith. We’ll also hike original and very steep Inca steps to the summit of Huayna Picchu for an amazing view of Machu Picchu sprawling below. We’ll stay a second night at Aguas Calientes.

DAY 7 – Thursday, Jan. 2: We’ll take the morning train back to Ollantaytambo and then drive to the pleasant community of Yucay for a memorable hacienda lunch. Later back in Cusco there will be time for relaxing or doing a little more exploring and souvenir hunting. We will lodge one last night in Cusco before flying to Bolivia in the morning!

DAY 8 – Friday, Jan. 3: We fly from Cusco to La Paz, Bolivia. After passing through Immigration and Customs, we’ll drive to the dramatic archaeological site of Tiwanaku with its sprawling ceremonial plaza, monoliths, sunken temple, and the enigmatic Puma Punku site with stonework so exquisitely cut and joined in a pre-technological era that some believe that extraterrestial intervention must have been involved. You can judge for yourself! From here we’ll travel across the scenic altiplano to Copacabana situated at an elevation of 12,500 feet on the southern shore of Lake Titicaca where we’ll lodge for the night.

DAY 9 – Saturday, Jan. 4: We embark on the “Inca Origin Pilgrimage” by taking a boat out on Lake Titicaca to the Island of the Moon to visit the remains of the Temple of the Virgins. Then we'll cruise to the nearby Island of the Sun where we will climb the Inca Stairway, linger at the Inca Fountain of Youth, stroll through the pleasant community of Yumani, and walk to our ecolodge situated on the crest of the island at 13,000 feet. It’s a step back into time with no cars and roads…just simple living with stunning vistas!
DAY 10 – Sunday, Jan. 5: We continue our “Inca Origin Pilgrimage” trek along the spine of the Island of the Sun, passing through groves of eucalyptus trees and the open expanse of stark puna grasslands still used by sheep herders today. We eventually arrive at the Sacred Rock of Titikala revered as the legendary site where the first Inca king descended from the sun to the earth centuries ago to begin the Inca dynasty. Nearby we’ll see the remains of the Chinkana temple where all successive Inca kings and nobles have made pilgrimage ever since. As the afternoon wanes we’ll hike down to Ch’allapampa harbor to meet our boat and cruise back to Copacabana where we will spend a final night in Bolivia.

DAY 11 – Monday, Jan. 6: We’ll cross back into Perú and drive along the scenic shoreline of Lake Titicaca, the world’s highest elevation navigable lake, situated at 12,500 feet. We will visit the historic town of Juli noted for its magnificent Spanish colonial churches, and then examine the traditional sacred portal site of Aramu Muru where it is believed that one can venture into an other-worldly fourth dimension, never to return to our present dimension. The choice solely will be yours! Further along we will visit the Inca Uyu fertility shrine at Chucuito before finally arriving at Puno, the largest city on the lakeshore, where we will spend the night.

DAY 12 – Tuesday, Jan. 7: Today we cruise across the vivid blue Lake Titicaca to the “floating reed” Uros Islands for a cultural program with a community. We’ll learn how people created and maintained the islands and have established a lake-bound lifestyle here. Then we’ll cruise on to Amantani Island and meet our hosts who will lead us from the harbor up to their community at 13,000 feet. This will be a step back in time, as there are no modern conveniences on this and other Lake Titicaca islands. We’ll slow down and have a taste of a simpler way of life. After lunch, we’ll walk up to a pre-Inca shrine atop one of the summits of the island to take in a majestic sunset. Then after a traditional evening meal, we’ll enjoy some Andean music and fellowship with our hosts under a vivid Milky Way. We’ll lodge in guest rooms provided by our hosts.

DAY 13 – Wednesday, Jan. 8: We’ll greet a brisk Andean morning with cup of zesty tea and a simple but delicious island breakfast. Then we’ll gather up some implements and head out to the community farm terraces—pre-Inca terraces that still are in use today—to learn about traditional Andes Mountains agriculture. We will get our hands a little dirty as we work the soil and harvest some good things for our lunch which we will assist in preparing with our host family. As afternoon comes on we’ll bid adios to our hosts, head down to the harbor, and board our boat for a relaxing cruise back to Puno on the mainland where we will have a delicious dinner complete with a cultural music and dance program, some time for souvenir shopping, and comfortable hotel stay.

DAY 14 – Thursday, Jan. 9: We depart the Lake Titicaca region and head to Sillustani, a sacred ceremonial site dating back to pre-Inca times, with awe-inspiring stone chullpas or funerary towers crafted by the Colla and Inca people to entomb their noble families. The vista of the adjoining Lago Umayo is spectacular. Nearby at Atuncolla, we will visit a local family to get a glimpse of the traditional herder lifestyle on the Andean altiplano and get up close to alpacas, llamas and guanacos. Then we’ll drive across the stark volcanic landscape of the altiplano with hopes to see some endangered vicuñas as we make our way to Yanque in the Colca Canyon region. After a sumptuous dinner at our mountain lodge, we’ll have an opportunity to soak in thermal springs under a magnificent starry sky.

DAY 15 – Friday, Jan. 10: We head to Cruz del Condor at Colca Canyon, a dramatic landscape of mountains and canyons, interspersed with picturesque farms and villages. Here we hope to see the majestic Andean condor in flight as it soars along canyon walls in search of a morning meal. Stretching ten feet across, the condor has the widest wingspan of any bird in the world…and it is Peru’s national symbol. By midmorning, we will be at the charming town of Maca and shop at its crafts market. Then we will head further across the altiplano to Arequipa. There we will have a nice farewell lunch and visit the intriguing Museo Santuarios Andinos principally dedicated to Juanita, the Inka Ice Maiden, whose mummy was discovered by mountaineers in recent times, entombed atop a volcanic summit. We’ll learn of her fateful and tragic story from long ago, as we gaze upon her preserved remains. Finally, we’ll head to the Arequipa airport for our domestic flight to Lima, and then our overnight flight back to the United States.

DAY 16 – Saturday, Jan. 11: We arrive at Dallas-Ft. Worth airport in the early morning after hopefully getting some semblance of sleep on our overnight flight. After passing through US Immigration and Customs, we’ll catch some breakfast and then head to our connecting flights to our home airports. Everyone will be back home by mid-afternoon…in time to get ready for Spring 2020 classes on Monday, January 13!