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## Chaski News

Summer 2010

### Southwind Adventures Marks 20th Anniversary

Southwind is proud to celebrate 20 years of promoting South America's finest destinations and creating unforgettable first-class experiences for our distinguished travelers. We were founded in 1990 to create a connection between US adventure-seekers and Peru, home to co-founder and former trekking guide Luis Felipa. Building on relationships with the most reputable operators on the continent, Southwind gradually added more destinations, always ensuring the utmost care was taken in researching and experiencing firsthand every piece of a new adventure. As word has spread, we have also had the pleasure of serving clients from around the world who wish to see the wonders of South America. Travelers have come to enjoy some of the continent's premier travel spots, such as Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands, Peru's Machu Picchu, the Patagonia region of Argentina and Chile, and Brazil's Amazon and Pantanal. We look forward to another 20 years of helping those with a thirst for experiencing other cultures fulfill their dreams.



**Special Offer!** In an effort to ensure that our clients are well protected, Southwind will cover 50% of your total insurance premium with Travel Insured International (TII) if purchased within 21 days of making your trip deposit. The amount will be credited in your trip invoice. You can choose your preferred plan from TII according to the type of coverage you want and your budget. Offer is valid for new reservations only starting July 15 and is valid for bookings through Dec 31, 2010.

### Chile's Atacama, A Diverse and Undiscovered Region



Northern Chile is home to a mystic landscape including geysers, volcanoes, ancient geoglyphs and the driest desert on the planet. Atacama is a hidden gem that rewards travelers with an experience like no other. Nature lovers will enjoy a salt desert populated by flamingoes, turquoise-blue high altitude lakes, sand dunes, the endangered wildlife, such as Guanaco and Vicuña, and the majestic centerpiece of the San Pedro de Atacama valley, Licancabur Volcano (19,410'). The bubbling geysers of El Tatio create a spectacular landscape for photographers. Historians have uncovered fascinating pieces of the past that will surprise even well-seasoned travelers. Archaeologists have discovered that the inhabitants of this area used sophisticated techniques of

mummification long before the Egyptians, leaving a physical piece of the ancient world for us to experience. The southern end of the Inca empire even extended to this region, as evidenced by burial sites on some of the surrounding 19,000 foot peaks.

Southwind's 4-day [Atacama Desert Extension](#) can be added to any of our Patagonia adventures to experience yet another one of Chile's extreme landscapes. Our guide will introduce us to shepherds and families in a local village, we hike along a creek in the scenic Guatin Canyon, and we visit ancient ruins with cloudless nights perfect for stargazing.

**Travel Fact:** The mountains of Atacama average only .004 inches of rainfall per year, and some places in the desert haven't had rainfall for over 400 years!



### **Casa Cartagena: A Luxury Hotel Preserving Peru's Heritage**

The boutique-style Casa Cartagena Hotel & Spa in Cusco has been declared a National Historic Monument by the government of Peru after undergoing a complete restoration, while also being named one of Condé Nast Traveler's top new hotels in the world. With its walls dating back to Incan times, this 17th century mansion has been host to dignitaries and nobility throughout its past. This history has been preserved in the décor, with a combination of traditional colonial and modern styles. The elegant suites are spacious, with amenities such as WiFi, flatscreen TVs, personal butler service, and an enriched oxygen system that allows an easier adjustment to Cusco's altitude of over 11,000 feet.



Art buffs will appreciate the details, from the paintings and sculptures to the intricate furnishings. The hotel's restaurant, La Chola, features both regional and international cuisine and will delight taste buds of the most discriminating gourmands. Spa enthusiasts will appreciate the selection of relaxing services, including a hydro massage pool, sauna, meditation rooms, massage services and a healing stone trail.

Southwind offers this magnificent property as an upgrade to any of our programs that include time in Cusco.

**Travel Fact:** This hotel may only have 16 suites, but it features a Spa with almost 4,000

square feet of services, and a wine cellar built into the ancient Inca walls with a collection of over 200 bottles.

## Full Train Service Resumes To Machu Picchu



After mudslides following heavy rains in January washed out sections of the train tracks leading to Peru's Inca citadel of Machu Picchu, services have been completely reopened as of July 1st. Engineers and crews have worked diligently since the beginning of the year to repair this primary mode of transportation to the country's world-renowned tourist destination. PeruRail, one of the private companies

servicing this route, offers two top classes of trains, the comfortable Vistadome (pictured) and the luxurious Hiram Bingham Orient Express service.

We encourage all travelers who have yet to see the glories of Machu Picchu to consider the destination soon. One of the goals of ecotourism is to have as positive of an impact on the local population as possible, and since this part of the country relies heavily on tourism it is estimated that up to \$1 Million per day was lost due to the mudslides and resulting closures. Now is the time for us to support the local economy and the heritage they wish to share with the world.

## Brazil Prepares For The World Stage

Rio de Janeiro may be famous for beautiful beachgoers and the most vibrant Carnival celebration in the world, but the city has quickly gained the world's attention by securing the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics. This will be the first time South America has hosted an Olympics, and the country is making significant investments in infrastructure to prepare for these renowned events.



As the largest country in South America, Brazil is home to many spectacular natural wonders, including the Amazon, breath-taking Iguazu Falls, the massive Pantanal wetlands, and of course gorgeous beaches and islands. To experience the variety of this magnificent country, Southwind offers these exciting adventures (customized trips also available):

- [Amazon Rainforest Cruise](#): See rare pink river dolphins, toucans and visit native villages on this 11-day journey that takes you deep into the rainforest on an intimate 18-passenger riverboat.
- [Pantanal Nature Safari](#): Wildlife enthusiasts will be in awe of the sheer number of birds and mammals that reside in the world's largest wetlands during this 10-day adventure. Activities include hiking, canoeing, and horseback riding.
- [Ultimate Brazil](#): For 14 days you will experience the best culture, history and nature Brazil has to offer, including Rio de Janeiro, Itatiaia National Park, the beaches of Salvador de Bahia, and the glorious Iguazu Falls.

**Travel Fact:** Brazil is the 8th largest economy in the world, and the 5th largest country by area, spanning 3 time zones. Scientists estimate that it is home to some 4 million species

of plants and animals!



## Travel Opportunities

Small-group departures with openings for 2010/11:

**Sep 03-16 (dates flexible):** [Southern Highlights Tour](#): Explore the southern beaches of Peru, including the Ballestas Islands for a taste of coastal wildlife, a flight over the enigmatic Nazca Lines, the "white city" of Arequipa, Lake Titicaca, Sacred Valley of the Incas, Cusco & Machu Picchu.

**Dec 05-19 & Feb 19-Mar 05:** [Hiking the Patagonian Andes](#): An active 15-day adventure starting with a tango show in Buenos Aires and ending with a tour of Santiago, featuring 10 days of hiking the region's most spectacular national parks.

**Oct-Dec or Mar-Apr:** [Lake District Odyssey](#): This cultural and walking tour of northern Patagonia includes short hikes around shimmering lakes, walking on the Osorno volcano flanks, soaking in hot springs and gourmet food at some of the continent's finest accommodations.

## Ways to Save!

Southwind offers several ways to save on our adventures, including discounts for Early Signup, Groups and Children.

Also inquire about Galápagos cruise specials.

Please visit our [Travel Discounts](#) page for further details.

### What's a Chaski?

"Chaski" refers to the messengers of the Inca who would run along the kingdom's vast network of trails delivering vital information. News, intricate communication, quipus - knotted strings conveying regional statistics or perhaps exotic foods were relayed between Chaskis as they made their way towards the Incan capital of Cusco.

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