

First American Experiences Group



Notes from you!
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Experiences Group Members

High in the Andes on Lake Titicaca are the man-made islands, another stop on our adventure to Peru. The first people to build and live on these islands near the city of Puno, Peru were Uros, but today the people are basically indistinguishable from the mainlanders.

To get to the islands we were transported in small sightseeing boats. Coming to greet us on our arrival were the villagers, men, women and children who inhabited that particular island. After the welcome, they sang to us in three different languages—the last was English!

The floating islands are man-made out of the reeds that grow profusely in the lake. Each island is approximately six feet in depth, floats in about sixty feet of water, and is anchored to the bottom of the lake. A new layer of reeds is put into place every three to four weeks. To walk on the island was like walking on a water bed—squishy and spongy.

On one of the islands are their school, post office, and other government buildings. The children are picked up by the boat each day and transported to and from school. Once they are older they transport themselves to attend school in Puno which would be similar to our high school.

As soon as the children are walking, their parents make a life preserver for them by tying empty plastic bottles around their waists. They learn to swim at a very early age, but even so, they do lose a few children each year to drowning.

The diet of the islanders consists mainly of fish, lake birds and the lake reeds. The soft roots of the reeds provide nourishment. Visitors to the islands are encouraged to bring fresh fruit to help in their nutrition.

Not all of the floating islands welcome tourists, so some remain untouched by tourism. Visiting the floating islands and the people who inhabit them was a highlight of our Peruvian Adventure.

Each member of our group was invited into the home of one of our hosts/hostesses. Our hostess was a single mother of two who proudly displayed her TV which was powered by solar energy. After a brief visit, we were invited to shop from a display of their handicrafts and then we said our goodbyes.

— Gene & Nancy Tychsen