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The next leg of the winter trip to Peru meant over-nighting in Iquitos and arising at five a.m. to take the plane to Cusco high in the Andes. Part of the layover was needed to shift the winter weight gear to my backpack and store the mud-splattered jungle clothes in a plastic sack in my big suitcase.

The flight is a bargain. It flies over 600 miles of jungle and mountains, gains 11,000 feet in altitude and shows a drop of 40 degrees in temperature.

Repacking to visit a different climate allows time to reflect on all the stuff brought from home. Long sleeved J.C. Penney chambray work shirts are the most versatile clothing I've ever worn for the Sierras, or the equator. The last ones I bought cost 17 bucks, but I always get stung by San Angelo merchants. Khaki cargo pants and combinations of long wool and ankle cotton socks increase the range of comfort. A bandanna handkerchief and a pair cotton gloves take little space and make a cold train ride a lot more comfortable.

No dress costume I know of travels better than a long sleeved sweater and a bow tie knotted around the collar of a clean shirt. Bow ties deflect attention from wrinkled pants and scuffed shoes. Also, a cravat will catch 50 times more gravy specks than a bow tie will.

Umbrellas or raincoats are needed for wet climates. But umbrellas can't be made into a pillow or blanket, so a raincoat is the best choice. An old hand showed me how to roll a pair of rubber boots as small as a pair of sneakers. In arctic tundra and in jungle swamps, rubber boots are like having an ace bandage for a sprained ankle.

Travelers never complain of carrying too much insect repellent. During black fly season, I prefer a well balanced side-by-side, Parker 20 gauge shotgun, loaded in number six shot, but repellent having deet in the formula will make black flies drowsy enough to be outrun on dry ground. On the Equator or on mountain slopes, few people's skins are dark enough to do without high index sunscreen. I sometimes feel like throwing half of my things overboard, but corner drug stores can be mighty scarce in the world's outposts.

I was glad I brought along a set of heavy clothes, because cold mountain rain fell in Cusco the morning we landed. Over in the corner of the claim area, the airline served hot mate' (mah-tay) and coca leaf tea, the local remedy for altitude sickness. The exertion of lifting a Dixie cup is noticeable in such thin air. Tourists claim the coca leaves, the mother plant of cocaine, makes them giddy; however, chamomile tea and milk toast pack a pretty good jolt at 11,000 feet above sea level.

Four American ladies attracted such a swarm of peddlers between the terminal and the hotel van, the whole parking

lot was blocked by Indians trying to reach them. Cusco was the ancient capital of the Incas, but these were the Morochuchos seen in travel ads in bright wool shawls and quaint hats. The ones in travel brochures, however, had been sponged off a bit more in soapy water than these street seasoned "Indios." Great actors they are, one minute looking pitiful, and the next overflowing in gratitude from having swindled a tourist into paying six times what a sweater cost downtown.

A huge fireplace blazed with piñon logs in the lobby of the hotel. More tea was served. I stored my big bag and readied my backpack to make the train ride up to the ruins of Machu Picchu. We had been warned the last part of the ascent to the ruins was closed by a rock slide. We were advised to bring only necessities for two nights.

I flinched watching the lady shoppers dragging Pullman suitcases of monstrous proportions, bulging with curios the weight of the hardware section of a Walmart store. The last Noelke to be a porter worked at a German castle in the 17th Century. Uncle Otto's genes are weak. Not one of his descendants is inclined to be a pack animal. On cold mornings, if I don't watch slipping the straps of the backpack on, I'll buck the whole thing off knowing full well what it is.

The choice had been whether to catch the train at Cusco for Machu Picchu, or allow time to travel up the Valle De

Sangre by coach to the station at the old Inca town of Ollantytombo. I chose the latter.

The van went through passes over 12,000 feet high looking down into irrigated valleys of lush fields. Thin cattle, staked to the rails, grazed the railroad right-of-way. I am certain the tribes had the train schedules memorized. From what I know of cranky claim agents and free grazing privileges from living on the Santa Fe line, a stake rope would be hard to explain around a dead cow's neck.