

Orient-Express Hotels Announces Opening Of Luxury Resort In Peru's Colca Canyon

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Orient-Express Hotels announced that Las Casitas del Colca will open April 15, 2008 on a 60-acre estate strewn with cactus and fruit trees and watered by natural springs.

This 20-room lodge in Peru's Colca Canyon will give visitors a rare and special opportunity to experience the beauty and tranquility of the Andes. Guests can personally select vegetables for their meals from the extensive garden and prickly pear orchard, and the onsite farm is home to horses, baby alpacas, cows, chickens, guinea pigs, rabbits and trout ponds.

All accommodations have been designed to meld with the environment and incorporate natural local materials whenever possible, such as Laja stone from the nearby Arequipa region for all floors and terraces. Each casita's amenities include heated flooring, a working open fireplace, WIFI Internet access and outside terrace with private heated plunge pool. Bathrooms are accessed through separate dressing rooms and feature large soaking tubs, both indoor and outdoor showers and glass ceilings to encourage guests to lie back and gaze up at the remarkable night sky.

The Spa Samay (meaning 'rest' in the ancient Incan language of Quecha) at Las Casitas del Colca has sweeping views of the valley. The spa will feature a sauna, two single treatment rooms, one double treatment room and a treatment suite complete with a soaking tub. A range of treatments inspired by the Andean culture will be offered, using local products from the Colca Valley and the highlands of Peru.

Las Casitas del Colca will employ strict environmental standards to protect the precious ecosystem of the Colca Canyon. Organic refuse will be used as compost for the vegetable garden and farm and waste water will be sent to a treatment plant to ensure that any water released into the environment is 100% clean. In addition, volunteer work can be organized for any guest wishing to be involved in the nearby Mission of Sister Antonia. Sister Antonia, a member of the Order of the Maryknoll, has lived in Peru for 53 years and worked with the Yanque community for over 36 years. The mission operates a soup kitchen in the Yanque marketplace from 5am every morning, providing 600 breakfasts a day to people in need. The mission is run purely on donations from tourists and anonymous benefactors and Las Casitas del Colca aims to assist Sister Antonia in her work.

Las Casitas del Colca is located in the Colca Canyon in Southern Peru, 160 km (100 miles) north of Arequipa. At 3,267m (10,725ft) deep, the Colca Canyon is twice as deep as the Grand Canyon and runs a distance of over 100 kilometers. The Colca Canyon is a scenic three-hour drive from Arequipa, passing through a National nature reserve and the alpaca inhabited foothills of the Chachani, Picchu Picchu and El Misti volcanoes.

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