Belmond Andean Explorer

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Overview

Belmond Andean Explorer — newest thoroughbred in the Belmond stable — is every inch a champion. It is South America's first overnight luxury train.

The train and its services are beautiful. The staff is bright and eager to please.

And the wild, mountainous Andean landscape stuns with its soaring peaks, beautiful altiplano and volcanoes, occasionally snow-peaked and sometimes blowing smoke and ash.

Read More

Click here for details on our exclusive IRT private journey which incorporates the 3-day, 2-night experience on the *Belmond Andean Explorer*. Depart from Cusco, capital of the ancient Inca

Empire, before traveling across the Altiplano towards Puno and the reflective beauty of Lake Titicaca. Guests visit Sumbay Caves, where the Peruvian highlands' first humans created their rock art, before reaching the volcanic 'White City' of Arequipa.

The train has a fascinating history.

Built in Australia in the 1990s, it began service as the *Great South Pacific Express* luxury train running between Cairns and Brisbane, only to be shut down after four years, the victim of poor track and rough rides.

There it languished for 13 years.

Then, in 2016, it was shipped to Peru — complete with its baby grand piano, podium for train check-in, the boarding steps and even the tags for luggage.

In May, 2017, it emerged like a butterfly from its cocoon, transformed into a rolling work of art. It is gorgeously outfitted with bright local textiles on pillows, throws and ottomans and proudly displays local art.

But look closely. Throughout the train are remnants of its luxurious past in Australia: Art Deco brass fittings and lamps, hammered steel bathroom sinks in the powder rooms — even a faintly-etched heron logo in an interior window (see if you can find it!).

The Peruvian train is intimate — it accommodates a maximum of 70 guests in 35 all en-suite cabins.

It includes an open-air observation platform on the rear lounge car, two dining cars serving fresh, locally-sourced delicacies, another lounge car with grand piano and bar, and a full spa car with treatment rooms.

Check out IRT's visit on the *Belmond Andean Explorer*.

Travelers should be aware that journeys on the Belmond Andean Explorer *involve high altitudes. Check with your doctor before booking. Oxygen will be available in hotels, on the trains and in vehicles.*

Accommodations

All of the *Belmond Andean Explorer's* 35 cabins have private toilet, sink, and shower. Maximum occupancy is 70 guests. The train stops at quiet stations in the evening, allowing for a restful night's sleep.

Suite Cabins

The largest are the nine suite cabins, which measure 140 square feet each and feature a plush King bed (6.56 ft x 4.46 ft) and cozy seating area with two chairs and a table, and compact

wardrobe. Private en-suite bathroom has shower and toilet.

Twin Bed Cabins

The 17 twin-bed cabins measure 80 square feet each. They have a long banquette and comfy seats, which stewards convert into two ground-level single beds for sleeping, measuring 6.1 ft by 2.2 ft.

Bunk Bed Cabins

The nine bunk-bed cabins are each 59 square feet and feature a long banquette that transforms into upper and lower single berths, measuring 6.1 ft by 2.2 ft.

All cabins have 24/7 call buttons and around-the-clock room service, air conditioning, 220-volt electrical outlets, oxygen tanks, complimentary tea and coffee, electrical adapters, and robes and slippers. On-board medical assistance also is available.

Dining

When it comes to dining — a big part of any luxury train experience — the *Belmond Andean Explorer* does not disappoint. Head of the culinary program is none other than Diego Muñoz, named by the *New York Times* as one of the world's leading chefs.

On the last day of their 2017 trip — the train's first 3-day itinerary — Society of IRT owners Eleanor & Owen Hardy joined their fellow train guests in applauding their chef, Julio Serrano. (He was "on loan" from Lima's famed Astrid & Gaston, which Chef Muñoz once led.)

The culinary team on board cranks out one Peruvian specialty after another. Much of the food prep is done at the Belmond Hotel Monasterio and loaded on in Cusco.

The fare in the two restaurant cars is fresh, colorful and seasonal, incorporating locally sourced ingredients from the Peruvian Andes.

Lounge & Spa

The lounge car includes a baby grand piano, comfortable seating and picture windows through which guests can gaze at the majestic vistas drifting past. The lounge also includes a full bar.

The rear observation car, meanwhile, is the place to unwind, meet new friends and enjoy the views while sipping Pisco Sours from the bar. The car includes an open-air deck — one of the IRT Society's favorite extras — where travelers can breathe in the bracing Andean air.

The train also includes spa car with treatment room, making it the third of our "World's Top 25 Trains" with this deluxe amenity. (The other two are India's *Deccan Odyssey* and the *Belmond*

Royal Scotsman.)

IRT Insights

We recommend taking a jacket that is easy to layer, as well as a warm hat and gloves, so that you never miss a chance to be on the train's outside observation deck due to weather. The scenery is spectacular, and the high altitude means it's chilly even on a sunny day.

IRT also recommends booking a suite cabin - it's great to have room to spread out. Eleanor and Owen, Society of IRT owners, loved their suite cabin. It boasted a double bed with two windows on one side, plus a sliding window on the other, which allows a view out the other side of the train.

It also had incredible storage capacity. That includes overhead racks, a big closet, a chest of drawers, and 2 comfortable easy chairs.