

Title:

Giving up the rat race...

Word Count:

555

Summary:

Office life and endlessly working away from home can have negative psychological affects on just about anybody. So find out what one man did to change the course of his life and break free from the 9-5 monotony of life in the UK.

Keywords:

inca trail to machu picchu, camino inca, Vince Stevenson, peru, aguas calientes, travelling south america, overland travel

Article Body:

Have you ever wanted to do something crazy?

Have you ever wanted to walk on the wild side?

Have you ever wanted to leave the office environment and never return?

Driving up to Manchester one autumn's evening in 1995, I decided something had to change.

The three hour journey from Leicester had turned into a six hour marathon, again.

It was cold, damp and desolate stuck in the endless lines of slow moving cars.

In my briefcase sat an unsigned and rather overly negotiated contract extension for my job in Leicester. When I finally arrived in Manchester at 11pm, bored, hungry and miserable - I knew that I could not face another winter of living and working out of a suitcase. It was time for serious change.

The week before, I had been stuck on a train for hours heading down to London.

The woman sat opposite me had left her travel magazine on the seat when she alighted at Luton. I had read my newspaper back to front and on the second time of reading, I found nothing new.

I reached over and killed a little time by flicking through the glossy magazine,

but each time I thumbed the pages, my eyes returned to page 34 which advertised a five month trip to South and Central America. Setting off from Ushuaia in Argentina (the most southerly City in the world) and finishing in Mexico City. The itinerary read like a Who's Who of top travel destinations.

Buenos Aires, Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Punta Arenas, Pucon (Mount Villarica - 10,000 feet active volcano), Bariloche, Esquel, the Argentine lake district, Santiago, Valparaiso, La Serena, the Atacama desert, Arica, Nazca, Arequipa, Cusco, Machu Picchu, Lake Titicaca, La Paz, Manaus, Angel Falls and so on...

Do you get the picture?

Travelling on a converted truck and free camping, the lucky adventurers would experience the full range of South and Central America's charms. Having never been camping before and with my thirty-fifth birthday celebrations still ringing in my ears, I suddenly realised that I was confronted by a serendipitous 'once in a lifetime' opportunity. Would I break the mould of my boring office life or step out bravely into an adventurer's world?

I was single, no obligations and I had the money. What is the point in having a big bank balance while life was passing me by?

The following Monday morning, I handed my notice in. Contract discussions had been delayed and I had only ten working days to endure. It seemed like forever before I was released from that working purgatory.

Once the deed was done, I was walking on air. Skipping down the corridor and whistling 'El condor Pasa' - I never whistle...

It was a euphoric experience - the weight of meetings, ironing work shirts and driving those endless miles up and down the M1 had dissipated into nothingness. Top priority on this project manager's list was buying outdoor gear, expensive sleeping bags, boots and all weather jackets.

And there was one place, one destination that I was focussed on - Machu Picchu in Peru - I had read so much about it and I knew that it would be the highlight of my journey...

If you want to find out exactly how my crazy decision turned out... then click on the link and follow my path on the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu.