South America Trip 2015

The Christchurch Airport was the place to be on the morning of the 19th of September. Mere hours after the French trip departed, the South America trip members arrived, luggage and family members in tow. Everyone was bustling with excitement anticipation for what was about to come. 48 hours of travelling later, including three flights, the excitement was a little less obvious. However, we had arrived in Buenos Aires! The three days we spent exploring the city were a great introduction to the South American way of life. The highlights included La Recoleta Cemetery, the Floralis Genérica, and practicing our Spanish in the many street side markets. Before long, we found ourselves on plane number four, destination Santiago. Santiago, the capital of Chile is where we spent the majority of our trip. Here we lived with a Chilean family from our sister school St Mary Joseph, which we went on to form very close bonds with. The welcoming ceremony was fantastic, with good food and plenty of dancing from every year group. Our days here consisted of going to school and classes for the morning, and then going out to an activity in the city in the afternoon. This included things such as an interactive museum, going to La Moneda, visiting Las Cascadas de Las Animas, and many more. After school finished, we went home and spent time with our host families practicing Spanish, and then danced the night away at a fiesta. After eight days of this, the group was on the move again. Flights five and six got us to Cusco, a city in Peru via Lima. In Peru, we ticked off a very big component of our bucket lists and saw the mighty Machu Picchu. It's as awe inspiring as you'd dream it would be. After visiting a vibrant market or five full of llama wool products in Cusco, 34 sweater/hat wearing teenagers got on two planes to return home to Santiago. We spent the final five days in Santiago in which included a day trip to the beautiful seaside town of Valparaiso, and a trip up the tallest building in Santiago. These three weeks flew by, and in what seemed no time at all, we were facing the harsh reality of saying goodbye. The farewell ceremony and leaving our new families left almost everyone crying. As we arrived in Christchurch, into the arms of our New Zealand families, we had no end to the stories we had to tell about the trip of our lifetimes.
Natalie McDonald