

My day at Pilpintuwasi begins at 5:30 when my alarm goes off. I do half an hour or so of yoga, twenty minutes of meditation and then settle in a hammock to read, drink coffee and eat oatmeal until it's time to get ready to leave. My walk through Padre Cocha isn't long, fifteen minutes at the most, and then I arrive at Pilpintuwasi, say good morning to Gudrun and begin to go through the motions of my morning tasks.

Setting up the cash book is stressful when you're as bad at numbers as I am, so I'm always pretty happy when that bit is over. After that, I'll spend some time creating monkey toys for the Capuchins, who need mental stimulation as they are so intelligent. This generally involves wrapping peanuts in various layers of paper and cardboard which I then wrap up like presents in a newspaper before taking them down to the Capuchins' cage. But it's after this that my favourite part of the morning begins - the monkey ball.

The monkey ball is a mush of mashed bananas and a special sort of protein biscuit that the monkeys love. I mush the bananas onto a plate, crush the biscuits through a vice and continue to mash it all together until it's slightly sticky. Once it's made, I head over to the ADI (Animal Defense International) section of the rescue centre - the part we don't show on the tour.

We don't show tourists around these cages because these animals have backstories which are a little more disturbing than the others. They find humans scary and don't trust them. They can act irritably towards even the workers who spend time with them every day. There are the spider monkeys, who were chained up in a guy's basement and beaten with a stick for seven years, and all the other animals in this section also come from various different pasts full of abuse and therefore are not very trusting of humans. This makes them unpredictable, and at times, dangerous. It's my job to feed them all.

The spider monkeys always grab at me with their long fingers and tails, often pulling me onto the cage and ripping my shirt. I try to make sure they all get a fair amount of food, and once they do, it's time for the rest. I make my way around these cages of disturbed animals, dodging swiping claws and snatching food away from the greedier monkeys who haven't learnt how to share yet. I always spend a few extra minutes with Toni and Malika, two female Capuchins who are both lovely, although Toni and I have got into a few scrapes before. I love the Saki monkey, with his ridiculously long hair and grumpy face and his calls which are high pitched and tittering and don't match his outside stocky appearance at all.

These animals are the ones the world has forgotten about. They were cast out for being too difficult, too unpredictable, too dangerous, too aggressive or just in the wrong place at the wrong time. They aren't part of the tour but they are so important in the work that we do here at Pilpintuwasi and the weird and wacky family that all these animals are a part of. It's the highlight of my morning.