



**patagonia**  
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# STAYING POSITIVE IN PERU

BY JASON SLEZAK

As we crested the final hill of our journey to Mancora from the airport in Piura, Peru, I could make out the lines of swell rolling across the Pacific. My heart began to race, and the fog from the 24 hours of travel was instantly lifted. I was about to reap the fruits of the solid south swell that was pulsing to shore.

Northern Peru catches the Southern Hemisphere's winter south swells, and its desert landscape combined with cool water temperatures provide ideal wind conditions: light offshore in the morning for surf, switching to side shore in the afternoon for kiting. Peru is a goofyfooter's dream come true, and I am a goofyfooter.

The wind was still light and offshore as we unloaded the vans; we could see the waves grinding down the point. I couldn't wait any longer. I grabbed my bags and unpacked my boards, eager to wash off the travel funk. I unzipped my board bag only to notice hunks of foam and fiberglass strewn throughout it.

Not to worry, I thought to myself, I brought backup boards – one being damaged during transit was not such a big deal. I pulled out my favorite kitesurf board to find it was broken into pieces. We were going surfing anyway, so I grabbed my brand-new custom FCD surfboard – broken in half. Two down, two to go.

Trying my best to stay positive, I pulled out the final two. My new FCD custom kitesurf boards were creased top and bottom, and rail-to-rail. All four boards that I had so carefully packed and lugged with me to this far-off land were broken and unridable, ruined before they could ever touch the water. My dream come true had suddenly turned into a nightmare.

I explained my disaster to Gary, a great friend, and he stepped away and quickly came back, handing me a classic 6'0" single fin. He told me to go out, have fun and try not to focus on what had happened.

It was a struggle, but I did just that. With each smooth arcing turn of the board, my smile grew bigger, while the anger and frustration of my broken board quiver melted further away. I found again the pure joy of wave riding for the feeling of the waves themselves, rather than the particular board under my feet.

After a short trip into town that evening, Walter, the owner of Walter's Surf Shop, was able to piece back together all but one of my boards. Over the next few days I surfed the single fin and a 5'10" keel fin twin in the mornings, and kited some fun, borrowed boards in the afternoon. No matter how well you plan your dream trip, in the end, it is what happens along the way that truly creates the adventure.

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JASON SLEZAK is a Kitesurf Ambassador for Patagonia who is based out of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Jason has spent the past 10 years traveling the globe promoting the growth of the sport of kitesurfing, while pioneering new kiting destinations. Visit [patagonia.com](http://patagonia.com) to see Jason's ambassador page and search by his name in our Video Gallery.






📷 Michael Juhl rides small rolling waves on the inside 100 yards; perfect for a kicker. Cape Verde, Africa. **BRYAN ELKUS**





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