

Rainforest Adventure - the Tambopata Reserve



Highlights

Have a five-day rainforest adventure! Explore the jungle flora and fauna and stay in a beautiful eco lodge situated in the Tambopata Reserve. Go mountain biking, kayaking and experience the amazing sight of Macaws gathering at a clay lick.

The Tambopata Reserve is part of the Tambopata-Candamo Reserve, an area of over a million hectares of tropical forest in South-Eastern Peru. It is home to more than a hundred species of mammals and 1300 species of butterflies, as well as an astounding 590 bird species - more than are found in the whole of the USA. Refugio Amazonas is situated in the reserve's buffer zone, in a 200-hectare private reserve, and is devoted to establishing economic relationships and fostering communication with the local community, in order to limit the exploitation of natural resources in the surrounding area.

On this adventure you'll alternate comfortable nights in the lodge with days filled with amazing experiences. On your first night you'll search for caiman using flashlights on the riverbank. You'll witness the whole process of harvesting Brazil nuts from beginning to end - the Brazil Nut Tree requires an intact forest ecosystem in order to produce nuts, so this is a sustainable economic resource that by nature also helps to preserve the pristine forest. You'll visit clay licks frequented by macaws and parrots, which gather each morning to get the valuable minerals and in doing so produce a mesmerising natural spectacle. You'll climb into the canopy using rope ascenders and a viewing tower for a better look at this important habitat, and take a night hike to discover the amazing sounds of the nocturnal animals' world.

Is it for me?

This trip is for visitors to the rainforest who want to combine education and exploration. The lodge is actively involved with helping to preserve the forest ecosystem through educating and providing alternative economic opportunities for the local people. This is perhaps the closest you can get to luxury in a place with no electricity. Refugio Amazonas is comfortable, beautifully built and in harmony with the surroundings.

Be aware that in the rainforest there are insects, wild animals and changeable weather patterns. Make sure you are vaccinated against any jungle diseases and that you are medically prepared for your trip - antimalarials are normally advised. Remember you will need waterproof clothing and good footwear. This trip is for people who respect the rainforest and will behave accordingly (leaving no rubbish, adhering to trails and listening to the safety advice of your guides).

Accommodation

You'll be staying at Refugio Amazonas, a 32-bedroom eco lodge directly adjacent to the Tambopata Reserve. The lodge has a bar, lounge and dining area. The rooms are stunning: seven by four metres, with mahogany floors and palm-frond roofs, and one wall open to the jungle (mosquitoes are not a problem near the lodge) to allow both ventilation and a feeling of intimacy with the forest itself. All rooms have private bathrooms. Note that there is no electricity in the lodge. Light is provided by kerosene lamps and candles, so bring good torches.

The food consists of self-service three-course cooked meals, with a balance of Peruvian and international dishes. Specific dietary requirements are gladly catered for. Unlimited sterile drinking water, coffee and tea are

Prices from

422 GBP (5 days) per person

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provided, as well as fruit juice with meals.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival and Reception

Upon arrival from Lima or Cusco, you'll be welcomed at the airport and driven to the Puerto Maldonado headquarters where you'll leave your heavier items and pack lightly for the next few days, then you'll be transferred to the Tambopata Port. From there you will take a boat ride to Refugio Amazonas, past the Community of Infierno.

(Packed Lunch)

Upon arrival, the lodge manager will welcome you and brief you with important navigation and security tips.

(Dinner)

You'll then head out to the river's edge at night, scanning the shores with headlamps and flashlights to catch the reflections from caiman eyes.

Day 2: Oxbow Lake and Farm Visit

(Breakfast)

You will paddle around the lake on a canoe or a catamaran, looking for lakeside wildlife such as hoatzin, caiman and horned screamers, hoping to see the otters which are infrequently seen here. You will also be rewarded with overhead sightings of macaws.

(Lunch)

Five minutes downriver from the lodge lies a farm owned and managed by charismatic Don Manuel from the neighbouring community of Condenado. He grows a variety of popular and unknown Amazon crops - just about every plant and tree you see serves a purpose.

(Dinner)

Tambopata National Reserve Lectures

Nightly lectures prepared by the staff of Refugio Amazonas cover conservation threats, opportunities and projects in the Tambopata National Reserve.

Overnight at Refugio Amazonas

Day 3: Clay Lick

A 15 minute boat ride and 60 minute walk from Refugio Amazonas is a clay lick used both by parrots and parakeets. From a hide you will see parrots and parakeets descend on most clear days to ingest the clay on a bank. Species such as Dusky headed and Cobalt winged Parakeet descend at this clay lick. With luck you will also see some or all of the following species in the early morning rush: Mealy and Yellow-crowned Amazons, Blue-headed Pionus, Severe macaw and Orange-cheeled (Barraband's) Parrot. You will visit the lick at dawn, when parrots are most active or in midmorning or early afternoon, when they are active.

(Breakfast)

Mammal Clay Lick

20 minutes walking from Refugio Amazonas is a peccary clay lick. These wild rain forest pigs show up in herds of five to twenty individuals to eat clay in the late morning. Chances of spotting them are around 15%, but well worth the short hike. Other wildlife also shows up including deer, guan and parakeets.

(Lunch)

Brazil Nut Trail and Camp

A few minutes hike from the lodge is a beautiful old growth patch of Brazil Nut forest that has been harvested for decades (if not centuries) where the precarious remains of a camp used two months a year by Brazil Nut gatherers can still be experienced. You will learn about the whole process of this sustainably harvested product, from its collection through to its transportation and drying.

Canopy Tower

A 30 minute walk from Refugio Amazonas leads to the 25 meter scaffolding canopy tower. A bannistered staircase running through the middle provides safe access to the platforms above. The tower has been built upon high ground, therefore increasing your horizon of the continuous primary forest extending out towards the Tambopata National Reserve. From here views of mixed species canopy flocks as well as toucans, macaws and raptors are likely.

(Dinner)

Night walk

You will have the option of hiking out at night, when most of the mammals are active but difficult to see. Easier to find are frogs with shapes and sounds as bizarre as their natural histories.

Overnight at Refugio Amazonas

Day 4: Ethnobotanical Tour

(Breakfast)

Along this trail you will find a variety of plants and trees that are used by the local population. We will learn about the medicinal (and other) uses of Ajo-Sacha, Yuca de Venado, Uña de Gato, Charcot-Sacha, Para-Para, among several others.

Time - off

Time off to relax and enjoy the lodge surroundings, try out a new trail, or repeat your favourite activity.

(Lunch)

Overlook Walk

This 2 km trail will bring you along the Tambopata River. You will be able to clearly separate a Terra Firme Forest from a Secondary Forest after this walk, as the trail crosses both habitats. Resting on the benches you can witness the Tambopata on its unhurried journey across the lowland rainforest.

(Dinner)

Overnight at Refugio Amazonas

Day 5: Farewell

(Breakfast)

Transfer Boat - Refugio Amazonas to Tambopata River Port

Transfer Tambopata River Port to Pto Maldonado Headquarters

Transfer Puerto Maldonado Headquarters to the airport

You will retrace your river and road journey back to Puerto Maldonado HQ and the airport. Depending on airline schedules, this may require dawn departures.

Details

Getting there

Flying to Peru...

Fly to Lima or Cusco and take an internal flight from there to Puerto Maldonado Airport (PEM).

Joining instructions...

You will be picked up from Puerto Maldonado Airport (PEM) and driven, first to the provider's Puerto Maldonado headquarters, and then on to Tambopata River Port. You will then be transferred by boat to Tambopata Reserve.

All boats are 20 ft long, roofed canoes with 55 hp outboard motors. They have scheduled arrivals and departures from each port. These schedules are programmed daily so that they fit seamlessly with airport arrivals and departures. There is no need to worry about whether your plane fits the boat schedule; this is arranged for you and the boats will wait for up to two hours.

Price includes

Price is per person based on 2 or 3 people sharing. Includes all meals as detailed in the itinerary, accommodation, all river transportation, and transfers to and from the airport of Puerto Maldonado.

Not included

International or domestic airfares, airport departure taxes or visa fees, excess baggage charges, additional nights during the trip due to flight cancellations, alcoholic beverages or bottled water, snacks, insurance of any kind, laundry, phone calls or messages, reconfirmation of flights and items of personal nature.

When is best

The lowland rain forests of the Tambopata Reserve lie far enough south of the Equator to provide a cooler, drier winter season between May and October. The general weather conditions, are warm and humid. The average daytime high is between 78° and 93° F (24° and 31° C) and the average nighttime low is between 66° and 78° F (20° and 24° C). Nevertheless between May and September, cold fronts from Argentina can sweep into southwestern Amazonia and push daytime highs down to 50° F (9° C) and the nighttime lows to 43° F (5° C).

During the rainy months of November through April, always be prepared for heavy rain that can continue for hours or days. Around 80% of the annual average 3000 mm rainfall occurs during this season.

Available

Jan—Dec

Typical Duration

5 days

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed

Travellers should bring

Recommended kit list Good binoculars; Camera gear; Tight-weave, light colored, long cotton pants; Long sleeved, tight-weave, light colored cotton shirts; Ankle-high hiking boots and sneakers; Flashlight with batteries; Sunblock lotion; Sunglasses; Broad-brimmed hat; Rain suit or poncho; Insect repellent; Small denomination bills; Small daypack.