

AMAZON

Creatures & Comforts



CASA DEL SUIZO

Carolyn Foreman, Audley's Latin America Programme Manager, discusses some of the options for visiting the Amazon.

The massive and mysterious Amazon rainforest has held an irresistible attraction for explorers, adventurers and armchair travellers for centuries. It is an exotic and intimidating place, a steamy ecological wonderland that covers approximately one third of the continent, and is home to a diversity of life that is unequalled anywhere in the world.

Whilst the majority of the rainforest falls within Brazil's borders, other countries also have a share, and so visiting the rainforest does not have to be done in conjunction with a trip to Brazil. And knowing that those travelling to South America understandably want to travel into the jungle but are perhaps a little wary, several members of our Latin America team have recently been on fact-finding trips to Peru and Ecuador. We wanted to see if it is possible to experience and enjoy the Amazon without too many close encounters with creepy crawlies, and without having to take a hammock and forage for dinner. Is it possible to see creatures but have comforts in the Amazon? They thankfully came back to say the answer is a resounding yes.



Ecuador is leading the way with a number of superb lodges that have an emphasis towards cultural and environmental awareness and preservation. Sacha Lodge is reached by a flight, a canoe ride and a walk, guests here have activities and excursions guided by expert naturalists, facilities include a canopy walkway and an

observation tower for prime bird watching. Accommodation is in cabins with ensuite facilities, and the food is plentiful and highly recommended! Another Audley favourite is Kapawi Ecolodge, which is run in conjunction with the local Achuar indigenous community, here the Achuar people share their wisdom of the medicinal properties of the flora. The lodge has a stunning location on the edge of the

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Pastaza River, and over 500 bird species have been noted in the area. For those people who feel that these lodges are a little too remote we recommend the Casa del Suizo, which is accessible by road. Here you can hike, paddle and swing through the rainforest before returning for a dip in the gorgeous pool to watch the sunset.



Peru has a number of excellent lodges dotted throughout its share of the rainforest. Just a half hour flight from Cuzco lies the frontier town of Puerto Maldonado which is the arrival point for visitors who can then travel for as little as half an hour or as much as 10 hours by river to reach their lodge. Our specialists will be able to talk you through the pros and cons of each, ensuring that we get the balance

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right for you. Recommended lodges here include the Reserva Amazonica, the Posada Amazonas and its more basic and isolated sister called the Tambopata Research Centre (notable for its location 500 metres from the world's largest macaw clay lick) and the Sandoval Lake Lodge. Animals that you should be able to see include giant



CEIBA TOPS RESORT

otters and various types of monkey. The northern Peruvian Amazon (reached by a flight into Iquitos) offers the Explorama lodges, which provide accommodation and activities to cater for a variety of tastes from the pioneering 'adventure in luxury' of the Ceiba Tops resort to the Explomapo Lodge which is 4 hours by boat, deep in to the rainforest, and thus more basic. Iquitos is also the starting point for cruises on the mighty Amazon River itself. The luxurious Rio Amazonas and MV Arca boats sail down to the "Tres Fronteras" area of Colombia, Peru and Brazil – a wonderfully romantic way to experience the Amazon!

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RESERVA AMAZONICA LODGE

just in comfort but in style. The majority of lodges mentioned here have private facilities including hot showers, all have great food, some have swimming pools and a couple even have air conditioning. So whilst you will get hot and sweaty whilst exploring the trails, rivers, lakes and treetop canopy, you know that you will be returning to a hearty meal and comfortable bed.

Travel File

Trips to the Amazon lodges of Peru and Ecuador can be organised as a component of any tailor-made tour to these countries, please call 01869 276 210 to talk with one of our specialists.