

AMAZON

Detailed Packing List and Important Facts

Travel Documents

- **Airline Tickets.** Check your flights online within 24-hours prior to departure and print out a copy of your flight itinerary to carry with you on travel. Verify that the name on your e-ticket matches your name as listed on your passport. We'll advise you of your Lima/Iquitos/Lima tickets on arrival in Lima.
- **Emergency Contact Sheet.** This and other final travel documents will be emailed to you prior to departure for you to carry with you and also leave with your parents.
- **Passport.** Make sure that it is valid for at least 6 months after your return date to the U.S.
- **Money.** American dollars will do fine in the Amazon. One hundred dollars is plenty for younger students and \$200 (plus a VISA or MC credit card) is sufficient for older travelers. Bring small denomination bills (\$1 for sodas, \$5) as well as \$20 bills. Bring the newest-looking bills that you can find without marks (torn or damaged bills are not accepted at Peruvian banks, making them worthless to vendors). Participants comment that cash, if carefully placed in more than one location, is more convenient than traveler's checks.

Luggage Considerations

- When packing, less is more! Every pound that you save while packing is a blessing. Please limit yourself to one or two medium-sized bags (soft-sided bag like a duffel bag works well), plus your carry-on. Most U.S. international carriers restrict passengers to two checked bag (max. weight per bag is 50 lbs; no boxes) and one carry-on (max. is 25 lbs), plus your purse (waist or fanny pack). However, please note that your Peruvian air carrier LAN Peru allows two checked bags, however weighing up to 50 pounds in TOTAL, plus your small carry on. The LAN penalty amounts to at least \$1 per additional pound over the limit. Bear in mind that you will also need to carry or pull your own luggage for a short distance in the Lima airport.
- Pack one or two full changes of clothes in your hand luggage that you take on the plane, and carry-on irreplaceables, e.g. medicines, camera, binoculars, vital documents, essential toiletries, luggage keys. Make sure that you hand-carry anything of significant value with you on the plane. The www.tsa.gov site provides up-to-date information about the correct way to transport liquids, gels, and aerosols. Check the latest airline security rules about using locks on luggage, as these rules are also subject to change.
- Humidity is the rule! Pack things that absorb (or are sensitive to) moisture in ziploc bags, such as notepads and papers, cameras, batteries, medicines or vitamins, and clothing to keep it fresh. Actually, packing in Ziploc bags is a good way to help you keep organized.

Take time to pack to keep yourself organized during the trip. This is very important! Although our transfers are very efficient, we will be one night in one place and another night in a different place and you will enjoy the trip so much more if you can keep organized. **Make sure that all of your bags are labeled** with your name, address, and telephone number.

Clothing

The Amazon's warm, humid conditions require that you bring lightweight, quick-drying clothing. Comfortable and casual is best; bring your old clothing. Everyone gets involved in workshop activities, and we'll be out and around regardless of the weather. You'll want to bring:

- A pair of **hiking shoes or old athletic shoes** with good tread. Shoes with waterproof soles are BEST as some of the rainforest trails can be very muddy. Your feet will stay dry and you can rinse your shoes off without soaking them. Comfortable shoes for walking are a must in the Amazon. This is not a good place to break-in new shoes. If you bring athletic shoes that are

not water repellent, bring along a second pair—backup if the first pair gets soaked on the Amazon trails. You can also wear the second pair around the lodges.

- **A pair of Tevas or sandals** to wear while walking around the lodges, to dinner, to the shower, or on the boats.
- **Several pairs of socks.** Light weight socks made of cotton, wool, or other quick-dry material that dry easily will do fine.

Shorts and lightweight field pants (jeans are hot and won't dry when wet). We will NOT be hiking through areas of heavy undergrowth. So if you typically wear shorts in the summer, wear Bermuda-length shorts and bring a pair of lightweight long pants (nylon is reasonably cool and dries very fast). A good spray of repellent on your legs, repeated regularly, will do for insects. You may also be most comfortable in shorts while on the boats. Light pants that convert into shorts are also great for hiking. Most people prefer the protection of long pants for night hikes, in case of falling down. Also, long sleeves and pants after 5:00 p.m. or whenever mosquitos are active are recommended.

- **Sleeveless shirts or T-shirts and at least one long-sleeved lightweight shirt.**
- **Hat with brim or sun visor** will be important for travel in the boats. Make sure that your hat fits snugly or can be tied to keep it from blowing off. We stay overnight at four different lodges and travel in a covered boat when we travel on the Amazon River between them. You will be in an open boat for a couple of the workshop sessions and on occasion for early morning birding.
- **Windbreaker or extra-light jacket.** Although our transfer boats are covered, you'll find a light windbreaker is especially helpful for travel on the Amazon River for warmth and protection from occasional sprays of water. You will likely need it for little else in the rainforest.
- **Bathing suit.** You'll find the pool refreshing at Ceiba Tops Resort, our last stop in the Amazon.
- **Lightweight rain poncho** is important. Choose one that you can carry with you at all times while on the trails, something compact that can be easily pulled out of your pack. Rain is unpredictable; you can begin a field session with not a cloud in the sky and come back in a spate of pouring rain.
- **Underwear, sleepwear.** For girls, an over-sized lightweight T-shirt for sleeping would be fine. A sheet and blanket are provided in the lodge rooms and sometimes both are needed when temperatures drop to the lower 70s at night.
- **Pair of old garden gloves** to protect your hands during our Amazon village service project.

Note: Upon departure from the Amazon, you may want to leave articles of clothing to be given to local people. Think of what you might want to hand-me-down when you pack.

Toiletries

- Shampoo, comb, hair clips (shampoo can double as a laundry detergent).
- Feminine hygiene items (not easily available while traveling) & tissue packs.
- Washcloth (towels are provided at the lodges).
- Soap & toiletries with NO scent (some fragrances attract insects).

Note: Again, check the www.tsa.gov website for up-to-date information about the correct way to transport liquids, gels, and aerosols.

Health Items

- Band-aids, antiseptics.
- Any prescription drugs or vitamins you regularly use (should not be a problem at customs if they are clearly labeled).
- Pepto-Bismol, aspirin, antacids, decongestants, throat lozenges, Imodium.
- Motion sickness medicine if you require this for travel on boats.

- Hand sanitizer – lotion or antibacterial wipes.
- Antibiotics. Some people pick up a prescription for an antibiotic to take with them, just in case they need it. Ciprofloxacin is one preferred treatment for severe cases of traveler's diarrhea. Check with your doctor for advice.
- **Strong insect repellent** (with at least 30% "deet" content works best) and insect bite cream (if you'd typically use this). While insects are probably no worse than many areas in the U.S., it is wise to keep yourself well covered with repellent and lightweight clothing on walks in the rainforest. (Also, be advised that deet will eat away at fingernail polish & plastic watch bands.)
- **Sunscreen** (SPF 30 or higher is best), sunburn cream, chap stick with sunscreen protection. You will definitely need sunscreen in the open boats during a couple of the field sessions.
- **Nutritious snacks.** The food at the lodges is delicious, but you may want to bring a few snacks to cover airport layovers or in-between times. Fruit or a dessert is served at lunch and dinner, but we find that there are those who do need a chocolate fix or to crunch into something crisp before the end of the trip. Nuts are nutritious and a good choice for a snack.

Cameras/Customs

- **Camera, Ziploc bags to protect camera and lenses.** Some people bring two cameras, having one as a back up or for more versatility in taking pictures. The jungle offers a terrific opportunity for macro photography or video. The humidity can affect the electronics in digital cameras or other sophisticated equipment, so it is not a bad idea to bring a simple back-up camera or a few disposable cameras. "Desiccant" packets are also very useful to put into sealed Ziplocs with your camera to keep it dehumidified and in working order.
- **Extra camera batteries** for all of your equipment (batteries lose power quicker in a humid climate) and **plenty of memory cards** (you won't be able to easily buy these in the rainforest). People who like to take pictures may take 100 digital images in a day. (For film cameras - use 400 ASA for jungle areas, unless you use flash.) Recharging batteries is generally possible during certain hours of the day when a 110 volt generator is operating.
- Only if you're bringing several expensive cameras, or pieces of video, or audio equipment should you be prepared for customs in Lima. In this case, bring several copies of a list of what you have, purchase receipts, including serial and model numbers and your name and address.

Miscellaneous

- **Journal** (5x8 spiral notebook is fine).
- **Wristwatch** (waterproof is best). Also, remember that insect repellent can eat away at plastic watches when selecting a wristband.
- **Bright flashlight or headlamp (a must!) and extra batteries** (alkaline type batteries are recommended). You will enjoy night hikes and boat trips in search of insects, frogs, toads, and other nocturnal animals. We suggest that you bring a **flashlight with a bright beam**. You'll see and discover more with a powerful flashlight (or headlamp). You can find water-resistant models in outdoor stores or camping/hardware sections of some stores like Wal-Mart or Lowe's. Put fresh batteries in the light and bring an extra set, plus one spare bulb. Although walkways are lit with kerosene lights in the Amazon, if you get up in the middle of the night or search your luggage after dark you will need your flashlight.
- **Travel alarm clock** or wristwatch with alarm setting.
- **Binoculars.** To get the most out of birding, bring a good pair of binoculars. A good web site to consult is <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/programs/AllAboutBirds/GearGuide/Binoculars/>
- **Sunglasses.** Use a "croakie" that attaches to your sunglasses so they can hang around your neck when taking them on and off to look through binoculars.
- **Eyeglasses or contacts.** If you wear either, bring an extra pair.

- **Lightweight fanny pack or small backpack** should be large enough to carry a water bottle, rain poncho, camera, etc. on hikes.
- **Water bottle or canteen that you can refill.** Bottled water is available for refills at all of the lodges. Fill your bottle before you leave home for use in the airports and on air flights.
- **Several large and small plastic bags** for your dirty clothes, for workshop activities, to stow artifacts, and to carry away trash. Even though you will see wastebaskets in your rooms in the Amazon, plan on bringing a gallon-size Ziploc bag to pack gum/candy wrappers, tissues, etc., which accumulate during the week. Pack it in and pack it out as best you can. Step lightly in this environment to help reduce the consumption of resources, and thus the impact on this area. Packing out your garbage is most important to help alleviate the Amazon's trash disposal problem.
- Field guides if you wish (keep weight to a minimum). Most of the naturalist guides carry a birding field guide with them on hikes.
- Contact lens solution and case. Bring enough solution, as it is difficult to find in most areas.

Items to Trade for Local Handicrafts

Although local people will also accept American dollars for merchandise, trading is recommended and a lot more fun! Consider the simple lifestyle of these people, their small body size, and the humid conditions under which they live when selecting your items for trade. Please do not distribute handouts or candy (particularly with sugar) to children as this encourages "begging."

- New and used T-shirts (particularly children's sizes) and shorts, caps, and other clothing items
- Kitchen items, e.g. pot holders, or other domestic items, e.g., clothes pins, clothes line
- Fishing hooks, gear
- Camping-related gear

Other Important Facts . . .

Water

Do not drink or swallow the tap water in Lima or any other facility. In the Amazon, shower water and water in the pitcher below the basin in your room are for washing and NOT for drinking. Do not swallow it either; it will make you sick. This water is from the river and is only filtered, not purified. Also, do not drink the tap water at Ceiba Tops Resort. Plenty of **purified water** is available for brushing your teeth and drinking at all the lodge facilities in the Amazon. Drink lots of water. Make sure that you fill your water bottle from the water stations before you go out on the trails.

Food

Do not eat fruit or any food from street vendors. You should have no problem, however, with foods prepared where we stay. For travelers, discomfort due to diarrhea is a possibility during the week. Your body may react to a change in food or water as a normal course of action. Such cases of diarrhea that are not severe and may be addressed by taking Pepto-Bismol at the first signs of discomfort. Although not often, some people who are particularly sensitive take Pepto-Bismol as a measure of prevention. Although meals are bountiful, it can seem a long time between meals during our travels. Bring a favorite snack if you like or healthy snacks that will not melt to share. Sodas are \$1 (including mineral water but no diet drinks are sold). Bring with you several small (\$1 and \$5) bills that are in good conditions. While we are in the Amazon, we are in a remote area of the world. While our stay here is comfortable, it is modest. It is important to realize and honor the local culture and understand that many supplies and food must be brought long distances at considerable expense.

Electricity

In the jungle? (Don't count on it!) There are no phones or electric lights there. In the Amazon, individual rooms and covered walkways are lit by kerosene lights at night. Although use of generators to recharge camera or video batteries is somewhat limited, you will likely be able to do so at Explorama and ExplorNapó Lodges (110v and 220v; 2 regular prongs not 3 at the lodges) and at the ACTS (110v). As noted earlier, bring backup batteries. Electricity is, however, available at Ceiba Tops Resort. You probably won't need a voltage converter for your battery charger as most are dual voltage and adjust automatically (check the specs on your charger or electric device – it should say “input voltage, 100v-240v”).

Communications

Note the "emergency contact and address" sheet provided in your departure email for your family to reach you in the event of an emergency at home. In the Amazon, you will be able to make a phone call to the States, only at Ceiba Tops Resort. We rely on radio communications in the event of an emergency in the Amazon. Sorry, no phones in the Amazon lodges for traveler's general outbound calling, however, you may receive emails and faxes directed to Explorama for free. (Bear in mind that unless it is an emergency, email messages can take a couple of days to reach you as they are printed out and delivered by boat.) Wi-Fi is now available at several of the lodges, so you can use your own email addresses, however these systems are not reliably available. You can purchase a calling card at the Lima airport or purchase a calling card in advance at <http://www.cloncom.com/> to make international calls to the States from airports in Lima or Iquitos.

Health

While no immunizations are required to enter Peru, note in Dr. Linnea Smith's Physician Letter that general recommendations for the Amazon are up-to-date precautions for: polio and tetanus; yellow fever, Hepatitis A, and malaria (mefloquine or malarone). Neither EcoTeach nor Environmental Expeditions are qualified to make medical recommendations. Though malaria is normally not a high risk for short term visits, attention to preventative measures is wise. The U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends either mefloquine (Lariam) or Malarone for travel to the Peruvian Amazon. It is important to consult with your public health center, physician, or travel clinic. Remember to take the Amazon Physician's Letter with you on your health appointment. We also strongly recommend that you contact the CDC in Atlanta at 888-232-3228 (menu provides information over the phone). The CDC website www.cdc.gov has excellent information.

Time

In January and February, Peru is on Eastern Standard Time, same as our U.S. East Coast time. Because Peru does not adjust its time for Daylight Savings, during our spring and summer Peru is on our Central Standard Time, when 9 a.m. on our East Coast (6 a.m. West Coast) is 8 a.m. in Peru.

Climate and Weather

Temperatures in the Amazon have little variation between winter and summer. Days are usually in the upper 80s and nights go down to the lower 70s. Very close to the equator, the Iquitos area experiences strong sun and high humidity. Heavy, though brief, rains often occur in late afternoon. Explorama's lodges are all surrounded by jungle and afford the shade of foliage.

Shopping

You can purchase Amazonian artifacts at Explorama's lodges and in the airports. Traveler's checks and credit cards (VISA and MC) are accepted at Explorama Lodge and ExplorNapó. You can also trade for items in the Amazon. (*See prior section for recommended items for trading.*)

Laundry

There is no formal laundry service in the Amazon. If there are items that you feel you must hand-wash, be sure that they are made of a fabric that dries very quickly.

Tips

Environmental Expeditions contributes \$40 per person tip: \$20 for your Amazon guides and \$20 distributed among the boat drivers and lodge staff. Tips are collected and presented as a group at the end of the Amazon program. Of course if staff members are especially helpful, a personal tip is much appreciated.

Accommodations

The lodge facilities in the Amazon are all comfortable and clean. The kitchen, dining area, showers, latrines, and sleeping quarters are all connected by picturesque covered walkways. Rooms are simple with a wash basin, mirror, shelves, and two beds each covered with mosquito netting (untuck one side to enter and tuck in the netting again for best protection). One towel is provided per person. Latrine toilets are located in separate adjacent buildings, cleaned daily, and inspected. They may be used for disposal of most feminine products. Toilet paper is provided. Hiking trails surround each of the lodge facilities. It is a strict Explorama policy that guests do not go on any of the trails unless accompanied by a guide or employee. It is potentially dangerous and we must ask that you comply.

Canopy Walkway Considerations

A special feature of your Amazon experience is the canopy walkway at the Amazon Center for Tropical Studies (ACTS). The walkway is constructed to help everyone feel secure. Netting is stretched chest-high on either side of the walkway and there is always something for you to hold on to for balance. Experiencing the walkway is, of course, optional. But most find success in trying—even the most acrophobic. Here are a few rules to consider:

- Please WASH your hands before going on the walkway. Deet is a recommended component for effective insect repellents. Deet also can destroy the ropes and netting on the canopy walkway.
- The slope of most walkway spans is very gentle, however shoes that have good gripping soles are recommended to prevent slipping.
- The walkway offers a grand opportunity to see many levels of the rainforest. Please respect the experience of others on the walkway by keeping your voices down and noise to a minimum.