

Detailed Itinerary

AMAZON RAINFOREST WORKSHOPS

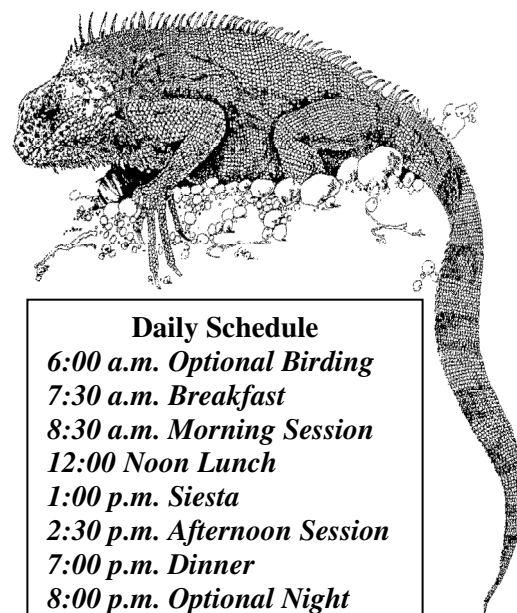
DAY 1 - Your Hometown / Lima, Peru

Group members depart on their domestic and international flights to Lima. You are met on arrival in Lima by our English-speaking travel partners.

DAY 2 - Lima / Iquitos / Overnight Explorama Lodge

At the Lima Airport, we are assisted in boarding our flight to Iquitos, in the upper Amazon basin of northern Peru. When we arrive in Iquitos, Peru, we ‘hit the ground running’ making every minute count in what will undoubtedly be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. At the Iquitos Airport, we will meet our Peruvian naturalist guides who will become your friends and close companions for the rest of the week. We travel by open-air bus through the bustling streets of Iquitos. Located 2,300 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, Iquitos is the most inland port navigable by ocean-going ships on the Amazon River. It is a city whose population has increased from 4,000 to over 400,000 in the last 40 years. We see **the excitement of the marketplace** where everything is sold, from homemade beverages, and live chickens to three-wheeled mototaxi parts. Papayas, plantains, pineapples, chili peppers, hearts of palm, aguaje, cocona, passion fruit, and manioc roots are always in abundance. Vendors display electric eels, fresh and salted fish, and crated chickens for sale. A fascinating array of chipped barks, dried leaves, hand-bottled potions, aromatic oils, and aphrodisiacs are among the items in the marketplace apothecaries. Children are everywhere, playing as the traffic of daily life goes by. We continue a short distance to **a dock to board our boat for an approximately 1-1/2 hour trip on the Amazon** (roughly 50 miles) to our first rainforest destination, Explorama Lodge. The Amazon River is the Earth’s largest river, which along with its tributaries in the Amazon Basin, holds one-fifth of the planet’s fresh water and covers an area nearly the size of the continental United States.

Traveling east toward the mouth of the Amazon, we see huge logs floating outside the lumber mills. What happens when these 100+ year old Ceiba trees becomes planks of lumber? Who polices the logging in the region? On the river outside of the city, we see thatch-roofed dwellings built on stilts and dugout canoes. It becomes obvious that the river is the life blood of the Ribereños, or “river people.” It is their highway, telephone line, food source, bathtub, and laundry. You’ll immediately feel the spirit of the children who offer their hearty waves from the river banks as we pass by. After reaching Explorama Lodge, we gather for a brief orientation and settle in before **our first walk into the Amazon rainforest, on the Bushmaster Trail**. We hike through an area that has been identified by the Missouri Botanical Garden as having the greatest tree species diversity in the world. Immediately, we see buttressed trees common to the area. Don’t be surprised to spot a troop of Saddleback Tamarin Monkeys feasting on a fig tree laden with ripe fruit. Keep a look out for a tarantula. You will come to know them as secretive, nonaggressive, and lovable creatures. Rainforest creatures are not often easy to find. We are fortunate for the highly trained senses of our Naturalist Guides, who have apprenticed with visiting researchers in order to learn the scientific names of plants and animals. Because our guides have grown up in the rainforest, they are able to share their knowledge of local names and legends and to identify wildlife that we otherwise would never see.



Daily Schedule
6:00 a.m. Optional Birding
7:30 a.m. Breakfast
8:30 a.m. Morning Session
12:00 Noon Lunch
1:00 p.m. Siesta
2:30 p.m. Afternoon Session
7:00 p.m. Dinner
8:00 p.m. Optional Night Walk or Boating

Day 3 - Overnight Explorama Lodge

Today and everyday we have the option of early morning birding – walking or by boat. The diversity of birds is astounding. A list of **nearly 600 bird species** has been compiled for the Iquitos region. As the sun comes up it beckons butterflies to gather at isolated puddles to feed. Resident macaws and parrots, some of the Lodge’s favorite photo subjects, await your arrival for breakfast, which is served buffet style in the dining room. During the morning, **the Yagua Culture & Craft Fair** will engage you in roof thatching, sampling local foods, constructing and using a blowgun, pottery making, basket weaving, and much more. After lunch, we’ll take part in an interactive activity with local children at Nancy Dunn’s library, Centro de Conocimiento Compartido. Not far away at the Yanomono clinic meet Linnea Smith, a U.S. physician who in 1990 abandoned her thriving medical practice in Wisconsin to serve the indigenous people of this region. Don’t forget to bring your items to trade this afternoon! Test your bargaining skills at the nearby Yagua village while **bartering for handicrafts**. As night falls we may hear the haunting bird call of the Great Pato. Active only at night, this bird sits erect and motionless during the day typically on a barren tree. Plan to join us in search of night creatures tonight, by boat or on the trail.

Day 4 - Explorama / Overnight ExplorNapo Lodge

After breakfast our group boards a covered, motor boat to travel 1-1/2 hours further downriver on the Amazon and up its largest Peruvian tributary, **the Napo River**. Our guides keep a watchful eye on the river bank for sloth and other wildlife sightings. You’ll see the pendant Oropendula nests in the silhouette of a trees near the water’s edge. From the Napo River, we take the serpentine path of the **Sucusari River** a short distance to our next jungle accommodations, ExplorNapo Lodge. Before lunch, we take a short hike to the **ReNuPeRu Ethnobotanical Garden** for a session with the Shaman Julio Morales and Guillermo Rodriguez. They are curators and resident experts on the care and use of medicinal plants of the garden. They offer their wisdom through a healing ceremony performed with a number of volunteers who share their particular symptoms – mental or physical. The garden is well maintained and labeled for a walking tour led by our guides to identify plants that are used for important medicines as well as food, spices, building materials, dyes for handicrafts, and insect repellants. Nearly half of all prescriptions dispensed in the U.S. contain substances of natural origins, and over half of these contain a plant-derived compound. More than 1/3 of these plants grow in tropical rainforests. After lunch we board an open boat to go along one of the Napo tributaries for **an afternoon fishing for piranha or catfish, and looking for the elusive Pink River Dolphin**. At low water, sandbars appear and attract egg-laying turtles. Rice is often planted yielding a crop later in the season. These areas of shallow water are prime spots for finding Pink Dolphin. For dinner this evening, we celebrate the biggest catch with a fish fry. Our evening boating trip takes us on the Amazon’s meandering tributaries through the forest to find night creatures and sleeping birds. Keep your eyes peeled for an iguana resting on a branch over the water. From our boat on a clear night, the view of the night sky and Southern Constellations will be a reminder of the unfathomable depth of our universe.

Day 5 - ExplorNapo / Overnight ACTS

This morning we take the rainforest trail from ExplorNapo to ACTS for a full day visit to the **Amazon Conservatory of Tropical Studies (ACTS)**. The well-maintained trail passes through primary forest and rolling terrain. As we walk, we pause frequently to fully take in everything around us. Notice the conspicuous Termite nests, large grey mounds seen attached to tree trunks. Listen for the raspy chirp of the Pygmy Marmoset, a shy tiny primate that feeds on tree sap, insects, and ripe fruit. We’ll pass numerous palm trees and shrubs, including the Irapay Palm, the most commonly used native roofing material. One of the high points of our day is to experience the **ACTS 1/4-mile Canopy Walkway**, an extensive, multilevel system of aerial platforms and pathways at a height of

over 100 feet. At this canopy level of the rainforest, visitors as well as scientists from around the world are able to study this amazing biome at the level where most tropical forest life exists. Looking out, you will see the tops of trees stretching out toward the horizon. Gaze down from the canopy walkway to see the luxuriant tangle of lianas (vines) and epiphyte-laden trees. **Peer into a bromeliad tank to see a microclimate**, where the overlapping leaves of the plant absorb nutrients from the water collected in its basin, frogs and insects lay their eggs, tadpoles and damselfly nymphs mature, and other aquatic microorganisms live. You'll notice **weather-monitoring stations**, microchips housed in small canisters attached to branches at treetop level, that gather data on temperature and rainfall. This weather data is a baseline to understand the plant growth and flowering as well as other rainforest phenomena. Consider all of the shades of green, the individual patterns, the lines, curves, forms, and textures that illuminate your view. You will no doubt spot a family of Shovel-Tailed Lizards; the male may be bobbing his head up and down in a mating display. You'll be fortunate to be on the walkway when the resident mixed flock comes through, including pairs of birds of different species each with its niche and unique diet of insects or fruits that complements others in the flock. After lunch, enjoy a short hike to see a Leaf-Cutting Ant Colony before returning later in the afternoon to the walkway for a sunset view of the canopy. As darkness falls, we take a brief night hike in search of a patch of **bioluminescent fungus** that lights up the ground underneath you, just as the stars illuminate the sky above.

Day 6 - ACTS / Overnight Ceiba Tops Resort

Dawn overlooking the rainforest canopy may be one of the most memorable parts of your rainforest experience. The vastness of the forest is revealed as the fog gradually lifts. Seeing this seemingly endless canopy is truly a contemplative, spiritual experience. By now you'll be accustomed to many different rainforest phenomena. You continue to see ants on every tree and better understand why these ants represent such a huge portion of the biomass of the Earth. Keep a watchful eye for katydids, spiders, walking sticks, and beetles on every hike. There is always something new to see. With literally millions of species of insects in the Amazon rainforest, the variety will astound you. We board covered boats for a return trip up the Amazon River. Enroute we make a stop to visit Caesar, a sugar cane farmer and see how he uses horsepower to crush his cane and collect juice for molasses and rum making. We arrive at Ceiba Tops Resort at the end of the day for a hot-water shower and thrilling ride down their popular water slide into a refreshing swimming pool. Watch the sky for the resident Scarlet and Blue & Gold Macaws to fly overhead chanting their raucous welcome. Miles of trails surround **Ceiba Tops in a privately owned protected reserve** of forest. Ceiba Tops is a good place to scout for the rare tropical Lanternfly with its long wings and shiny head. The Wax-Tailed Hoppers here are equally strange insects and also related to the Cicadas, with long white, waxy plumes and a survival strategy that allows part of its body to be eaten and still escape predators alive. Heliconia plants are interspersed among our cabins. The long banana-like leaves, pendent yellow and red blossoms, and bright colors of their bracts attract hummingbirds such as the Long-Tailed Hermit.

Day 7 - Overnight Ceiba Tops Resort

Today will be one of your busiest days in a local village involved in a ½-day service project with the Ribereños people. The community welcomes us with a ceremony and acknowledgement of our contribution to their village. We'll exchange songs and praises, and begin any number of activities including: 1) painting a school; 2) planting palm or fruit trees or vegetable garden; 3) constructing and painting a fence around school property; 4) palm thatching the roof of a shelter; or 5) creating ecological or community signs. We'll share a lunch of local food and celebrate by playing soccer and volleyball together. Observing how precious few resources sustain each family or classroom in a rural village school is a humbling experience. We leave the community with a huge sense of gratitude and respect for the lives of the people of the Amazon. There will be time yet today to plan for our wrap-up ceremonies and the celebration of an exciting week.

Day 8 - Overnight Ceiba Tops Resort / Lima / USA

After a leisurely breakfast, we take a short walk to the Ceiba Tree. Gazing up at the tree's towering branches will take your breath away. Your visit to **Monkey Island's conservation** project will also no doubt be a highlight. You'll see as many as seven kinds of monkeys in their natural environment. Watch the Wooley Monkeys tangle, playing with each other in the lower branches of a nearby tree. Marvel at the strength of the prehensile tale of the Spider Monkey. Observe the social and foraging behaviors of the Sakis, Tamarins, Marmosets, and Uakari. Ten species of bananas as well as fruit trees are grown on the island to provide food for the monkeys. We take time this morning to **recount what we have seen and ask some reflective questions**. What category of birds on your list have you seen the most? What sounds do you recall? What unique noise did the Capybara make to display his comfort with your affection? Which "bird song" reminds you of the sound of a large drop of water falling into a pool – magnified ten times? Can you diagram a rainforest foodweb of animals that you have seen? What part do herbivores (including seed eaters & nectar lovers), carnivores, and decomposers play in this web? What jungle partnerships do you recall? What have you learned about what we Americans consume? What parallels can you draw between rainforest ecology and your local environment? How can we be more environmentally sensitive at home? How can we help indigenous people and assist them in protecting the rainforests in their backyard? We finish our packing and say good-bye to our rainforest companions. This afternoon we transfer to the Iquitos airport for our flight to Lima in time for our overnight return flight to the U.S.A. Note that you will actually return home on Friday, DAY 9.