

Peru Ultimate Wildlife Itinerary 13 day - Amazon Wildlife & Machu Piccu

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Amazon Wildlife and Machu Picchu

Our most value-packed Peru itinerary emphasizing wildlife and bird watching "off the beaten path." It includes Tambopata Biosphere Reserve, the remote Manu Biosphere Reserve, Cusco, the Sacred Valley and Machu Piccu. Extend your trip to include Lake Titicaca, Puno, Colca Canyon, Paracas, the Nazca Lines, hike the Inka Trail and more.

Itinerary at a Glance:

Day 1-5	Tambopata Reserve
Day 6	Cusco
Day 7- 9	Machu Picchu & Sacred Valley
Day 9-10	Manu Biosphere Reserve
Day 11-12	Manu Wildlife Center
Day 13	Cusco & Lima

DAY 1 Arrival in Lima
Airport assistance available.

DAY 2 Puerto Maldonado - Tambopata Reserve - Posada Amazonas

Transfer from your hotel to the airport for your flight to Puerto Maldonado, a bustling frontier town at the confluence of the mighty Madre de Dios (Mother of God) and Tambopata rivers. The principle activities here are gold mining, Brazil nut collecting, timber, agriculture and eco-tourism. We'll enjoy a brief tour of the area during the thirty minute drive from the airport to the Tambopata river port in the community of Infierno. Here we'll board a motorized canoe for a two-hour motor boat trip up the Tambopata river to the POSADA AMAZONAS LODGE. We'll enjoy a tasty lunch wrapped in banana leaves on our journey, while birdwatching and wildlife viewing. During our voyage we may see Capped Heron, Jabiru Stork, and many species of wildlife typical of the riverside forest. Upon arrival, we'll relax and hike to a canopy tower which affords spectacular views of the river and rainforest and excellent wildlife viewing opportunities including birds-eye views (literally!) of parrots, toucans and macaws. Posada Amazonas is a comfortable yet unobtrusive 30 room lodge owned jointly by Rainforest Expeditions and the Local Community of Infierno A video about the forest of Tambopata will be displayed after dinner. (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

DAY 3 Tambopata Reserve - Oxbow Lake, Tambopata Research Center We will be up at dawn for a visit to the Tres Chimbadas oxbow lake. After an early breakfast we depart, fifteen minutes from Posada Amazonas by boat and a 30 minute walk take us to the lake shore. From here we take a long, easy canoe ride around it. We will look for giant river otters, turtles, hoatzin, and wading birds. The giant river otters that are seen in Tres Chimbadas belong to a resident family of nine. As we approach noon, animal activity decreases, and we will continue travel up the Tambopata River for 5 to 6 hours into the pristine heart of the reserve. After the first hour we will leave the final traces of human habitation behind as we cross the northern boundary of the 700,000 hectare, completely uninhabited nucleus of the Tambopata National Reserve. Differences in wildlife abundance will be noted immediately: we will begin to sight macaws, herons, kingfishers and cormorants frequently and improve our chances of encounters with capybaras, caiman, storks, ducks and other wildlife. Boxed lunch on the boat. We will arrive at TAMBOPATA RESEARCH CENTER in the early afternoon, being greeted by the Chicos, our flock of semi-wild, rescued macaws. On arrival, we will hold an orientation session. After this we will hike the 1.5 mile Bamboo Trail, a trail that is famous for the abundance of rare birds that live exclusively in this habitat and are endemic to southern Peru. It is also the home of the frequently found Howler and Dusky titi monkeys. As we birdwatch our way through the trail we will end our hike at the overlooks which are good places to observe canopy birds like tanagers, jacamars, elaenias, guans, and oropendolas. We will return to TRC for dinner. After dinner, to cap off a fulfilling day we can have a frog walk through the forest, allowing the photo lovers to take beautiful macro shoots of american bullfrogs, horned frogs, tree frogs and an incredible variety of colorful insects. (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

DAY 4 Tambopata Reserve - Macaw Clay Lick, Tambopata Research Center

At dawn we will cross the river and enjoy the world's largest macaw clay lick where hundreds of parrots and macaws of up to 15 species congregate daily. The January 1994 issue of National Geographic features an article on Tambopata Research Center that describes the daily spectacle at the clay lick:

" When the morning sun clears the Amazon tree line in southeastern Peru and strikes a gray-pink clay bank on the upper Tambopata River, one of the world's most dazzling wildlife gatherings is nearing its riotous peak. The steep bank has become a pulsing, 130-foot-high palette of red, blue, yellow and green

as more than a thousand parrots squabble over choice perches to grab a beakful of clay, a vital but mysterious part of their diet."

You can expect to see ten to twelve members of the parrot family: Red-and-green, Blue-and-gold, Scarlet, Red-bellied, Chestnut-fronted and Blue-headed Macaws; Mealy and Yellow-crowned Amazons; Blue-headed, Orange-cheeked and White-bellied Parrots; Dusky-headed, White-eyed, Cobalt-winged and Tui Parakeets and Dusky-billed Parrotlets. This show will continue until the macaws sense danger, usually in the form of an eagle, and depart simultaneously in an explosion of sound and color. Around mid-morning, when the most intense clay lick activity is over for the day, we will return to TRC for breakfast.

After breakfast we will hike the 1.5 mile Ocelot Trail, a trail which exemplifies the quintessential rainforest. Although at this time of day mammals and birds are not as active as in the early morning, we will concentrate on the forest itself which is estimated to be 200 to 300 years old and includes truly huge Ceiba trees and Strangler figs. Eight species of mammals live here including Saddleback tamarins, Squirrel and Brown Capuchin Monkeys and Collared peccary. This trail is the one which most often sports ocelot, puma and jaguar tracks, although any one of these three large cats is extremely difficult to spot. We will return to TRC for lunch and then embark on a 2 mile hike to the palm swamp, a nesting colony and preferred roost for Blue and Gold and Red-bellied Macaws.

NOTE: Although the peak activity at the clay licks is from mid August to October there are different degrees of macaw activity at the swamp year round. In fact, the most exciting time to visit it is from October to March, during the nesting season, when macaws will land on the nests and stand there for several minutes, interacting with other individuals at less than 20 feet from our observation tower. The scenes at the swamp, especially with late afternoon sun in our backs, make prized photo opportunities. After a lazy afternoon with the macaws we will hike back to the lodge for dinner. (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

DAY 5 Tambopata - Jaguar Kayak Float Trip, Meet Shaman, Medicinal Garden

We'll depart at dawn for a second visit to observe the macaw clay lick. After breakfast, time permitting, we'll visit a small drying oxbow lake for another chance to see the famous prehistoric looking hoatzin, as well as giant otters and more elusive mammals and birds.

Wild Planet Exclusive!

Jaguar Kayak Option Highly recommended by our clients! Requires adding 1 extra day in the Reserved Zone.

Kayak downriver silently at the first sign of dawn, looking for jaguars and tapirs by the riverbanks. We have seen an exceptionally high number of jaguars and tapirs as they visit the river to drink in the stillness of the morning. This option requires adding one extra day in the Reserved Zone. You will leave TRC at dawn in kayaks, and enjoy a few hours on the river until the motorized canoe catches up to us for the ride back POSADA AMAZONAS LODGE.

We'll enjoy

lunch on the boat wrapped in banana leaves. Upon arrival, we'll visit a native medicinal garden and meet with the local shaman, who, with the help of our translator will answer questions about medicinal healing with the plants of the rainforest as well as his role as the spiritual leader of his community. Return to Posada Amazonas lodge for dinner and overnight (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

DAY 6 Tambopata Reserve/Puerto Maldonado/Cusco/Sacred Valley

After an early breakfast, we'll board our riverboat back to Puerto Maldonado and transfer to the airport for our flight to Cusco. Upon arrival we'll enjoy a city tour including the Santo Domingo Convent Monastery - the legendary Koricancha "Site of Gold", the most important temple devoted to worship of the sun and whose walls were plated with sheets of gold; the Plaza de Armas and the Cathedral. After seeing the most interesting sites of the city, we'll drive out into the countryside outside Cusco to visit some of the remarkable Inca ruins in the area including the cult centre of Sacsayhuaman, the temple and amphitheatre of Kenko, Tambomachay and Puca Pucara. This evening we'll enjoy the breathtaking views of coming down into the Sacred Valley where we'll stay the evening at POSADA YUCAY. (Breakfast)

DAY 7 Sacred Valley / Machu Picchu

Today we'll transfer to the train station for a spectacular sight-seeing train to Machu Picchu, "The Lost City of the Incas". The train has ceilings made mostly of glass which allow you to gaze out at the 18,000 foot snow-capped peaks of the Andes and marvel at the Inka ruins around nearly every bend. Upon arrival at Machu Picchu you'll enjoy a full guided tour of the marvelous citadel, visiting the main square, the royal quarters, the temple of the three windows, the circular towers and the sacred sun dial and burial grounds. Lunch at Hotel Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge Dinner and overnight at MACHU PICCHU PUEBLO HOTEL (Breakfast, lunch and dinner)

DAY 8 Machu Picchu / Cusco

Today we'll get up early to admire Machu Picchu at sunrise, a truly mystical experience. For hiking enthusiasts, walking up the Huayna Picchu peak overlooking the site is suggested. This afternoon we'll take the railcoach back to Cusco and enjoy the colorful sunset peaking through the snow-capped Andes. Overnight in Cusco. (breakfast)

DAY 9 Cusco / Manu Biosphere Reserve

The ONLY lodge in the Reserved Zone!

Highlights: Manu has the highest biodiversity of any park on earth. Most visitors are restricted to the Cultural Zone where wildlife is much less abundant, but we will venture deep into the more remote, wildlife-rich Reserved Zone.

Wildlife: No other Peru Itinerary will expose you to so much wildlife! 200 species of mammals live here; tapirs and jaguars are commonly sighted. Manu's 13 species of primates include wooly monkeys and emperor tamarins with white mustaches. The lowland rainforest in Manu harbors 1,000 species of birds, the highest concentration of bird life on earth; 40% more than the Brazilian Amazon!

Today we'll transfer from our Cusco hotel to the airport for a flight to the landing strip at the mouth of the Manu River, followed by a 5-6-hour motorized canoe ride up the Manu River to the MANU WILDLIFE TENTED CAMP (WTC) near Cocha Salvador in the most remote part of Manu called the "Manu Reserved Zone". The Wildlife Tented Camp is more like a lodge than a tent camp. It features screened hermetically-sealed, double-occupancy, walk-in tents with hinged doors and solid wooden floors. Each tent measures 16.5x10x7 feet and the floor is elevated above the ground on wooden stilts. There are extra-long twin beds in each tent, each with a mosquito net. Our camp also features an elevated, screened dining room with wooden floor and a separate complex of shared hot-water showers and flush toilets. (Lunch and dinner)

DAY 10 Manu Biosphere Reserve Today we'll visit Cocha Salvador and take a canoe or catamaran outing on the lake to observe birds and to search for wildlife. Later we'll hike trails through different forest types, with excellent chances to observe some of the 13 species of primates that live here, including endangered Emperor Tamarins. Also, we'll take a short motorcanoe ride on the Manu River to the trail head for Cocha Otorongo, walk the trails at Cocha Otorongo to search for Woolly Monkeys (the best place to see them in the Manu lowlands), climb a 50-foot (17m), canopy tower to the mid-canopy, and return to Wildlife Tented Camp for the night. (Breakfast, lunch, and dinner)

DAY 11-12 Manu Wildlife Center

Today we'll transfer to our second Manu lodge that features a special camouflaged observation platform. Perched almost 20 feet above a salt lick, the blind allows you to observe and photograph tapirs in action, including at night. The rainforest around the lodge is also home to 13 species of primates including rare woolly monkeys, monk saki and emperor tamarins. (Breakfast, lunch, and dinner)

Day 13 CUSCO/LIMA

Today we'll leave very early to boat down the Manu River (the best time to see jaguars, tapirs, and other rare wildlife) and catch our flight to Cusco. Optional city tours in Cusco or later Lima to tour the city and explore its famous cultural sites and ancient pre-Inca ruins. (Breakfast)