



Life is but a journey ... to travel is to live twice ... Omar Khayam

VANTAGE
WORLD TRAVEL
free yourself

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SEVEN-NIGHT ITINERARY

FLOODED SEASON (December–May)

Day 1: Saturday IQUITOS/AMAZON RIVER

5:00 p.m. Arrival

Your guides await you, as your flight from Lima glides in for landing at Iquitos International Airport. After you've claimed your luggage, you will board an air-conditioned bus and transfer to Iquitos' main wharf. There the M/V Aqua lies at anchor.

As you settle into your over-sized suite, your vessel will start on its journey toward the Yanayacu River, deep in the heart of Amazonia. Over the next seven days, you will also sail along the two largest tributaries of the Amazon, the Ucayali and the Marañon, as well as on the mighty Amazon itself. You are embarking on a spectacular adventure, to a place visited by only a few of even the most experienced world travelers.

8:00 p.m. Safety Drill and Briefing on the Top Deck

Before dinner we will perform a routine safety drill. Following that, your Cruise Director and Guides will give a brief orientation talk about life on board, where you will go and what you will see on your Amazon journey.

8:30 p.m. Welcome Dinner

Peruvian cuisine is considered one of the world's best. Here it is presented with a touch of European flair, and a vegetarian dish is always available. Raise a glass of fine South American wine to toast the beginning of a beautiful journey, then look out the window and watch the river go by as you experience your first wonderful meal aboard the M/V Aqua.

Perhaps enjoy a nightcap on the Upper Deck, under the stars, before retiring.

Day 2: Sunday AMAZON/YANAYACU RIVER/CORRIENTES LAKES/YARAPA RIVER

6:30 a.m. Breakfast

Enjoy the first of our generous breakfast buffets, complete with traditional breakfast egg dishes, plus Peruvian specialties and fresh-squeezed juices.

8:00 a.m. Yanayacu River Exploration

This morning you will board your comfortable excursion skiff to begin our first adventure along the Yanayacu ("black water") River. Life jackets, ponchos, rubber boots and plenty of cold potable water are always available on the skiffs. As we float along this river, we will pass fishermen paddling in their dug-out canoes and will have the chance to see a great variety of wildlife, including terns, orioles, blackbirds, black collared hawks, monkeys, and sloth. Your guides will provide lots of detail about life along the river as we journey past its banks. Upon arrival at Corrientes Lake, you will have the chance to fish for the fearsome, sharp-toothed piranha, highly valued as a food among the local people. As midday approaches, we will begin our return journey.

11:00 a.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

The staff will await you with icy towels to help you cool off from your time on the river.

1:00 p.m. Lunch

Enjoy lighter mid-day fare in our air-conditioned dining room.

4:00 p.m. Yarapa River Exploration and Night Excursion

After time for a siesta, we will board the skiffs again to explore the narrow Yarapa River. Here, in the heart of the rainforest, you are likely to spot squirrel monkeys, herons, egrets, and the unusual horned screamer. As the sun sets, you will become aware of the rich and varied sounds of diurnal creatures marking their territories. As soon as it is dark enough, we will turn the spotlight on to search for night wildlife—nighthawks, frogs, opossums, tarantulas, and caimans are easily spotted along this part of the river.

7:30 p.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

The M/V Aqua continues to make its way upstream, toward the birthplace of the Amazon River—the dramatic spot where the Ucayali, Marañon, and Amazon River all unite in a rush of water. Sit under the stars on the Upper Deck and sip a pre-dinner pisco sour.

8:30 p.m. Dinner

Day 3: Monday MARAÑÓN RIVER/PACAYA-SAMIRIA NATIONAL RESERVE (NAUTA CAÑO AND YANAYACU-PUCATE)

6:30 a.m. Breakfast

Today you can choose between two options:

Option 1: Full day excursion with a Picnic Lunch at Ranger Station No. 2

7:30 a.m. Full day excursion at Ranger Station No. 2

Travel by skiff from Yanayacu Creek all the way to remote Chingana, a small creek where giant river otter usually nest. These handsome animals were killed in great numbers for their pelts, and are now threatened with extinction. On this excursion, you will also see howler and capuchin monkeys, the squirrel-sized monkeys called tamarins, pink and gray river dolphins, and a vast variety of birds. We will also take you deep into the jungle, where you will encounter wildlife and learn first-hand about the important medical value of jungle plants. And we will show you famous Kapok Trees (*ceiba pentandra*), the tallest trees in the Amazon Basin. Enjoy a generous picnic lunch at the park Ranger Station No. 2, before we begin our journey back to our vessel.

4:00 p.m. Arrive at the M/V Aqua.

Option 2: Guided Jungle Walk/Siesta/Monkey and Dolphin Expedition

8:30 a.m. Guided Jungle Walk at Ranger Station No. 1

This morning your Park Ranger will tell you all about sustainable resource management projects in Amazonia. You will visit one of the projects, where villagers are planting palms to obtain oil.

11:00 a.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

12:30 p.m. Lunch, followed by a Siesta

4:00 p.m. Monkey and Dolphin Expedition

On this late afternoon expedition, you are likely to see the two different kinds of freshwater dolphins—including the unusual pink ones—found in the Amazon. Later, keep your eyes directed toward the jungle canopy, where you can spot at least several kinds of primates—among the 13 species of monkeys resident in the National Park. Perhaps you will catch a glimpse of tamarins and howlers, dusky titi monkeys and pigmy marmoset monkeys. Watch for alligators, and keep your binoculars at the ready, as you are likely to see more than 200 species of birds.

6:00 p.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

7:30 p.m. Dinner

8:30 p.m. Optional Night Excursion

This evening we will take the skiffs out in search of caimans, tree boas, tarantulas, and frogs. After this night adventure, the M/V Aqua will start sailing downstream on the Marañón River, toward the headwaters of the Amazon.

Day 4: Tuesday BIRTHPLACE OF THE AMAZON/PUERTO MIGUEL VILLAGE/MARAYALI RIVER

5:30 a.m. Birthplace of the Amazon

This morning, the M/V Aqua skirts the edges of the vast Pacaya-Samiria Reserve, a flooded forest covering five million acres at the headwaters of the Amazon basin. Rise early and be on your skiffs at 5:30 a.m. to view one of the great spectacles of the Southern Hemisphere: the sun rising over the birthplace of the Amazon River. Here—where the union of two major tributaries, the Ucayali and the Marañón, form the world's greatest waterway—nature is at its most dramatic. Your dawn excursion will be accompanied by abundant bird song, as you glide in small boats past river banks populated by large-billed terns, laughing falcons, gray tanagers, sandpipers, five kinds of parakeets, the exotic short-tailed parrot, and dozens of other birds.

7:30 a.m. Breakfast

8:30 a.m. Puerto Miguel Village

We will travel by skiff to Puerto Miguel native village, where you can meet and interact with local villagers from this most remote part of the world, and can learn a bit more about their culture, traditions, and folklore. You will also have the chance to trade items for local handicrafts.

11:00 a.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

12:30 p.m. Lunch

Share a last lunch with your fellow passengers who have taken the three-night journey.

4:00 p.m. Giant Water Lilies Night Excursion

Late this afternoon, we will travel by skiff to a small connector canal between the Ucayali and Marañón Rivers, where you will have a chance to see the world's largest aquatic plant, the giant water lilies or "Victoria Regias." You will be one of a very small number of people who have ever seen these plants bloom at night. On the way back to the Aqua you will also observe caimans, frogs, fishing bats, and other animals of the night.

7:00 p.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

8:30 p.m. Dinner

Meet new passengers, who have signed on for the four-night trip, and enjoy your meal as we start our journey along the Ucayali River.

Day 5: Wednesday UCAYALI/YANALLPA/DORADO RIVERS/PACAYA SAMIRIA NATIONAL RESERVE

7:00 a.m. Breakfast

8:00 a.m. Yanallpa River Expedition

This morning we will board the skiffs to explore this amazing black water stream, part of the vast Amazon flooded forest. Your guides will tell you about the rainforest and its dynamic life, as we explore what scientists call a "gallery forest," because of its narrow vegetation, creating a tunnel of leaves. As we float through this tunnel, it is easy to spot parrots, macaws, and fluffy monk saki monkeys, very close to the skiff.

10:30 a.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

12:30 p.m. Lunch

4:00 p.m. Dorado River Exploration and Night Excursion

This afternoon we will take a magical journey through the "Mirrored Forest," seeing towering trees reflected in the black water river, while spotting dozens of enchanting parrots, blue-yellow macaws, and a great variety of primates and sloths enjoying nature unperturbed by our presence. As we make our way back to our vessel, you will also have the chance to see caimans and frogs and fishing bats.

7:30 p.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

8:00 p.m. Dinner

Day 6: Thursday PUINAHUA RIVER/HATUM POSA LAKE/PACAYA RIVER

6:00 a.m. Hatum Posa Lake Expedition

This morning we will rise early to cruise this beautiful and intricate ox-bow lake. As we follow its shore, we will almost certainly surprise several kinds of monkeys and many types of birds, including terns, neo-tropic cormorants, egrets, herons, hawks, and our favorite horned screamers. We will also take the skiff into other black water lakes linked to this huge lake in the flooded forest.

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Jungle Walk Near Hatum Posa Village

On this walk, your guides will introduce you to native people doing subsistence farming, and will tell you how they learned to cultivate wild plants and trees to earn farm income. Deep in the primary forest, your guides will also show you the wealth of fruit trees and medicinal plants hidden in the jungle.

11:00 a.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

12:30 p.m. Lunch

4:00 p.m. Pacaya River Exploration, Plus Night Trip from Ranger Station No. 1 to Yanayacu Lake

In the late afternoon, we will take our skiffs along the Pacaya River, journeying from Ranger Station No. 1 toward Yanayacu Lake, where you can see the abundant life that is hidden in the deep rainforest. We have chosen this time of day to give you the chance to see the late afternoon activity of the rainforest animals, including fluffy monk saki monkeys, capuchin monkeys, and the large, easy-to-spot howler monkeys. As the sun sets, listen for the loud, ferocious-sounding warning signals made by howler monkeys marking their territories.

When night falls, you will hear the second movement of the Amazon rainforest symphony, as other nocturnal animals send their shrill calls across the tree tops. As we take the skiffs back to the M/V Aqua, we will use our special spotlight torches to locate night creatures, including, perhaps, huge caimans.

7:30 p.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

8:00 p.m. Dinner

Day 7: Friday PUINAHUA/PACAYA RIVERS AND CAROCURAHUAYTE LAKE

6:30 a.m. Pacaya Exploration and Breakfast Aboard the Skiffs

Back on the river as the sun rises, you will see a treasure trove of wildlife, including parrots, macaws, toucans, and many kinds of monkeys—as well as some "surprise" species that you have never seen before. Enjoy a "bag breakfast" of light sandwiches and fresh juice. Since we will stop near a popular dolphin feeding spot, you will see quite a show as you enjoy your meal.

11:00 a.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

From this point, we will start sailing down river, toward Iquitos.

12:30 p.m. Lunch

3:30 p.m. Carocurahuayte Lake/Fishing Trip

This afternoon, we will travel to this splendid "hot spot" lake, where you will be certain to catch some of the more than 3,000 species of tropical fish that live in the Amazon basin. Our key focus will be on piranhas, those small, carnivorous fish with a big reputation for being scary.

6:30 p.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

Once we are back onboard, the ship will continue its journey down stream, sailing toward Iquitos through the night.

8:00 p.m. Farewell Dinner

Leaving the peace and beauty of the jungle behind, we will enjoy our final dinner together, swapping stories about the wonderful experiences shared on the river.

9:00 p.m. Crew Presentation

After dinner, your Guides will introduce some of the crew members that you have not yet met, but who have been busy with the "behind the scenes" work that has helped to create a seamless experience.

Day 8: Saturday ARRIVAL IN IQUITOS/CHECK OUT AND DISEMBARK AT THE MAIN WHARF/CITY TOUR/TRANSFER TO THE AIRPORT

7:30 a.m. Breakfast

8:30 a.m. Last Skiff Trip (optional)

For those who want some last moments on the Amazon, your guides will take you out on the skiffs to grab some special, last-minute photos of the wildlife that you have seen along the river.

10:00 a.m. Return to the M/V Aqua

Sadly, it's time to finish packing. Please leave your packed suitcases in your suite for pickup before going to lunch.

12:00 p.m. Light Lunch

12:40 p.m. Disembarkation/City Tour/Transfer to the Airport

This afternoon, we will take you on a tour of Iquitos, once a glorious city in the days of the rubber boom.

Later, we will stop at the San Juan Amazonian Indian Market, for a last chance to shop for local crafts.

4:00 p.m. Check-in at Iquitos International Airport

Your guides will help you with check-in, and will stay with you until you have boarded your flight back to Lima.

5:30 p.m. Your Flight Departs for Lima

Note: All itineraries are subject to change, due to weather and other conditions. All times indicated are approximate, and are also subject to change.