

9-DAY EXPEDITION

to

The Amazon Rainforests of Peru

DAY 1 –FRIDAY, JULY 31 - U.S. / LIMA

Our wildlife expedition to the Amazon rainforests of Peru begins with our arrival in Lima, the capital and most important city in Peru. After clearing immigrations and customs we are met and transferred to the **Hotel Cosa Del Sol Ramada** for the remainder of the night. (D)

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUGUST 1 - LIMA / IQUITOS / EXPLORAMA LODGE

Following breakfast we transfer back to the Lima airport and board our flight over the Andes Mountains and across the vast Amazon rainforests to Iquitos, a lively frontier city on the banks of the Amazon River. Here we meet our rainforest guides who will be our close companions for the week. From the airport a short but interesting bus ride takes us through the bustling streets of Iquitos. This isolated city, 2,300 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, is the world's most inland port, navigable by ocean-going ships coming up the Amazon River from the Atlantic Ocean. We pass through the market where everything from automobiles to zucchini, are sold, bartered and traded. Upon rounding a bend we get our first view of the world's largest river. Even this far from its mouth, the Amazon is often more than two miles wide. From the bus we transfer to a fast boat and follow the meandering course of this "river sea" for about an hour and a half (50-miles), to Explorama Lodge. Soon after leaving the city we begin to see elevated thatch-roofed dwellings and dugout canoes and realize what an important element the river is in the lives of the *Riberenos*, or river people. It is their highway, means of transportation, communication, source of food and water. It is also their bathtub and laundry. Upon arrival at Explorama Lodge we have time to settle into our rooms and look around before a buffet lunch is served. In the afternoon we set off with our guides to explore the primary rainforest of the Lake Trail, with its giant epiphyte-laden *Ceiba* and *Ficus* trees. Our naturalist guides, who have grown up here, have a profound knowledge of the many plants and animals we encounter. They explain the ecological niche each organism fills in the complex rainforest ecosystem and describe how many plants are utilized by the local people. Following our first experience in the rainforest, we have a chance to freshen up and relax in a hammock before the hollow rhythm of a jungle drum summons us to dinner. Upon entering the lantern-lit dining hall a wide variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, meat or fish, and delicious desserts greets us. Our overnight accommodations are at Explorama Lodge. B/L/D

Established in 1964, Explorama Lodge is located on the banks of the Amazon River and surrounded by virgin rainforest. Romantic kerosene torches and lamps illuminate palm-thatched houses and private sleeping rooms. Covered walkways lead to the Tahuampa Bar, the Dining Room, the Sun Porch and two Hammock Houses. Showers & toilet facilities adjoin each house.

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUGUST 2 - BUSHMASTER TRAIL & DOLPHIN QUEST

We awake to the exotic sounds of the dawn chorus and have the option of joining our guides for an early morning bird walk. After breakfast we depart on the Bushmaster Trail. Researchers from the Missouri Botanical Garden have determined that this area is one of the most biologically diverse places on Earth. More than 300 species of trees have been identified here in a single hectare (2.471 acres) of rainforest. Our guides continually point out many interesting forms of life including medicinal herbs, leaf-cutter ants and poison arrow frogs. The electric blue flash of a passing morpho butterfly seems to illuminate the shade of the forest, which is intensified by a luxuriant tangle of lianas. Following lunch at the lodge we return to the Amazon for a boat ride to Yanamono Island. The downstream end of the island is frequented by freshwater dolphins as they cavort in the shallows. Two species may be found here - the gray dolphin (*Sotalia fluviatilis*) travels in pods and may occasionally be seen leaping out of the water. The larger pink river dolphin (*Inia geoffrensis*) has a pronounced bulge on its head and an elongated dorsal fin. It is a more solitary animal and not as acrobatic as its smaller cousin. Many species of birds may be seen along the river's edge. A few of the most common are the Amazon kingfisher, yellow-headed caracara, wattled jacana, lesser kiskadee flycatcher, yellow-billed tern and spotted sandpiper. Later in the afternoon, we set out on the trail of Seven Bridges to visit a local Yagua community. Though the Yagua no longer live in their large thatched communal house, it is maintained as a focal point of their lives. The traditional dress of fiber skirts and headdresses has been largely replaced by shorts, T-shirts and dresses, but is still worn here in this reconstructed village. The interest of visitors encourages the age-old crafts and traditions of a people that are in cultural transition. Some old ways are revered and kept, and some new additions from the outside world are practiced. The Yagua, while still hunting, fishing and gardening, have adapted to their situation by becoming the traders of the river. Useful items obtained by barter are traded throughout the region, and the Yagua trade decorative items they make using items they obtain from the river and forest. As the sun sets, we return to Explorama Lodge, have dinner and enjoy an evening of local music at La Tahuampa Bar, relax in a hammock, or join our guides for a night hike in search of nocturnal animals. B/L/D

DAY 4 – MONDAY, AUGUST 3 - EXPLORAMA LODGE / EXPLORNAPO LODGE

After breakfast we depart on a 2-hour boat ride down the Amazon and up the Napo River to **ExplorNapo Lodge**. About seven miles downstream from Explorama Lodge the Napo River, largest of the Peruvian tributaries, joins the Amazon. It was here, in 1541, that Francisco de Orellana crossed the Andes, paddled down the Napo and becoming the first European to see the Amazon River. As we pass, we may be able to see the statue, commemorating this explorer that has been erected in the village bearing his name. About 40 miles upriver from this point we enter the Sucusari River, a serpentine dark-water tributary of the Napo River. A short distance up the Sucusari we arrive at ExplorNapo. This jungle lodge is composed of a large open, thatch-roofed structure, on stilts, with covered walkways linking the sleeping quarters, dining area, showers and latrines. There is no electricity or forced running water here. At night light is provided by the warm glow of kerosene lanterns and water for showers is available by gravity flow from elevated holding tanks. In the afternoon we join our guides and walk to the ReNuPeRu Ethno botanical garden for an introduction to the local pharmacopoeia and to learn how the local people use many of these rainforest plants as medicines. Some of the complex organic compounds found in these plants have curative properties and have been incorporated into our modern medicines. In the evening we depart on a night float on the Sucusari. We drift silently down river with the current while our guides use flashlights to search the jungle-lined riverbanks looking for the eye shine of caiman, kinkajou and other nocturnal animals. Returning to camp, we enjoy a savory dinner cooked over an open hearth. B/L/D

The ReNuPeRu Ethno botanical Garden, a teaching garden for medicinal and useful rainforest plants of the area, is located adjacent to ExplorNapo Camp. It is tended by a local shaman and his sons who are always pleased to explain to visitors the uses of some of the over 150 species of plants now preserved in the garden. Many of these organic remedies are already being used in modern medicine and many more may be utilized in the future. Neighboring primary rainforest trails make it possible to view additional valuable plants in their natural habitat.

DAY 5 – TUESDAY, AUGUST 4 - EXPLORNAPO LODGE

In the morning we explore a black water lake, one of the most unusual and exciting habitats of the Amazon Basin. Also known as oxbows, lakes of this type are formed when sections of a river or stream, become

separated from a flowing stream. Their still, mirror-like waters are often crowned by giant Victoria water lilies whose leaves may exceed seven feet in diameter and are capable of supporting the weight of a small child. Piranha, the “jaws” of the Amazon, are abundant here and our guide shows us how to catch them with a cane pole and hook baited with a piece of raw meat. One of the world's most unusual birds, the hoatzin, frequents the forested edges of black water lakes. These strange, primitive-looking birds build their nests overhanging the water. At the first sign of danger the immature birds drop from the nest into the water, where they swim below the surface to a safe place. Young birds have strong temporary claws on their wings, which aid them in clambering back to their nests. Following lunch we depart on a trail walk into the primary rainforest. Away from the river, the forest is never flooded and contains wildlife not found close to the riverbanks. The rare black-necked red cotinga, giant jacamar and Cuvier's toucan are sometimes seen here and the under story swarms with butterflies. Colorful poison arrow frogs scramble along the forest floor and the air vibrates with the sound of the jungle's teeming insect life. After dinner we join our guide for a night walk to learn some of the secrets of the rainforest's nocturnal inhabitants. B/L/D

Opened in 1993, the Amazon Conservatory of Tropical Studies (ACTS) provides a research station for scientists in the rainforest and an opportunity for layman to share in their discovery. The large, thatched buildings are identical in construction to those found at Explorama Lodge. A donation to maintain and protect the surrounding Reserve and Canopy Walkway is included in the tariff for the ACTS Field Station.

DAY 6 – WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5 - EXPLORNAPO LODGE / ACTS / CANOPY WALKWAY

In the morning we follow our guides through the rainforest to the Amazon Conservatory of Tropical Studies (ACTS) located in a protected 250,000 acre reserve. During our walk we may stop to watch leaf-cutter ants, look for birds and monkeys and marvel at the lush forest that surrounds us. In the afternoon we join our guides for an introduction to the local pharmacopoeia and learn how many rainforest plants are used as medicines by the local people. We also visit a flooded forest to learn how each species adapts to periodic inundation by water. A *colpa*, or mineral laden bog, provides opportunities to observe signs of mammals that come here to ingest the mineral salts otherwise missing from their diet. Deer, peccary, agouti and tapir all take advantage of this natural supplement. After dinner we go out on a night hike or visit the nearby canopy walkway to experience the nocturnal life of the rainforest. B/L/D

The Canopy Walkway is an experience unequalled in the rainforest! At a height of over 118 feet and extending for one-third of a mile, the Canopy Walkway provides a view of the rainforest from the treetops, the best vantage point for observing Amazon wildlife and vegetation. The Canopy Walkway is accessible to all and requires no special skills or equipment. The suspended walkway is spread between 14 of the area's largest rainforest trees and is the longest canopy walkway of its kind in the world.

DAY 7 – THURSDAY, AUGUST 6 - ACTS / EXPLORNAPO / CEIBA TOPS LODGE

An early morning visit to the rainforest canopy is an unforgettable experience and one of the highlights of our Amazon experience. A short walk brings us to the initial stage of the canopy walkway. Wooden steps ascend from the forest floor to the beginning of a multilevel system of aerial pathways and platforms that are securely suspended by ropes and cables. As we climb the walkway to a height of over 10 stories (118 feet), we eventually emerge above the top of the seemingly endless canopy and experience a sight few have ever witnessed. Here is an unexplored world where over 2,000 epiphytic plants may cling to the branches of a single tree. It has been estimated that 20 million species of insects may live in the forest canopy 80% of them as yet unknown to science! Bird watching from the canopy walkway can also be extremely rewarding. From this vantage point we may often look down on feeding flocks of parrots or have several species of tanagers at eye level. Some of the more spectacular birds we may expect to see here include the spangled cotinga, red-legged honeycreeper, paradise tanager, cream-colored woodpecker, and many-banded aracari. After breakfast at the ACTS, we walk back through the reserve to ExplorNapó. Here we board our boat and travel back down the Napó and up the Amazon River to Ceiba Tops Lodge. The trip provides us with another opportunity to observe life along the river and watch for interesting animals and birds. A kingfisher perched patiently on a partially submerged tree, dolphins arching through the churning waters and maybe a three-toed sloth hanging peaceably from a high branch - there is always something to see along the way. This is our last evening in the rainforest but there is still time to relax and enjoy the tales of the guides and listen as they sing and play in bar. B/L/D

DAY 8 – FRIDAY, AUGUST 7 - CEIBA TOPS LODGE / IQUITOS / LIMA

After lunch we travel back up river to Iquitos and board our flight to Lima. Here we check in for our flight to the U.S. As our aircraft carries us back over the Andes Mountains and the unbroken rainforest canopy of the Amazon basin it is good to know that such an unspoiled place exists and to have personally experienced its wildlife wonders. B/L/D

DAY 9 – SATURDAY, AUGUST 8 - LIMA / U. S.

We arrive this morning in the U.S. and return to our homes with a wonderful collection of memories of our experience in the Amazon rainforest. (B)

EXTENSION TO CUSCO, THE URUBABMA VALLEY & MACHU PICCHU

DAY 1 – FRIDAY, AUGUST 7 - CEIBA TOPS LODGE / IQUITOS / LIMA

After lunch we travel back up river to Iquitos and board our flight to Lima. Following our arrival we are met by our Lima guides and transferred to the **Hotel Cosa Del Sol Ramada** for the remainder of the night. B/L/D

DAY 2 – SATURDAY, AUGUST 8 - LIMA / CUSCO / SACRED VALLEY / YUCAY

In the morning we transfer to the Lima Airport and board our flight to Cusco. Upon our arrival, in this ancient Inca capital, we join our English-speaking Peruvian guide, depart by bus and descend from the city into the sacred and historic Urubamba River Valley. After checking into our accommodations at the **Hotel Posada Yucay** we have lunch and then visit the salt works of Salinas, which have been in continuous use since Inca times. A natural saltwater spring is channeled into a terraced hillside of pools from which the water evaporates, leaving a residue of salt, which is scraped into piles and sold. Salt has been an important commodity since ancient times and was transported and traded throughout the Inca Empire. We may also have time to walk through one or more of the nearby villages and see the shops and homes of these rural people. Our dinner and overnight accommodations are at the Hotel Posada Yucay. B/L/D

DAY 3 – SUNDAY, AUGUST 9 - YUCAY / WILLOQ / OLLANTA / YUCAY

After breakfast we drive to a remote Willoq village where a community of Indians lives a way of life that has not changed very much since pre-Columbian times. Their language, dress, social organization, homes and occupations are much the same today as they were in the days of the Incas. The people of Willoq have chosen to ignore the outside world and they continue to spin and weave the wool of their llamas into beautiful, naturally dyed, rugs, and garments. Following lunch we drive to the archaeological site of Ollantaytambo, where ancient temples and fortresses were built to protect the Sacred Valley. These enormous structures so impressed early European visitors; they believed them to be the work of giants. This stronghold of the Incas was constructed on a steep slope and is surrounded by a high wall of massive stones. Walkways, pools and canals were expertly fashioned, demonstrating the unrivaled skill of these ancient engineers and builders. The walk up to the ruins requires a good deal of climbing up steep pathways and narrow stairways but the view from the top is worth the effort. At dusk we may glimpse an Andean Condor as it soars high above us over the steep-sided valley. In the evening we return for dinner and to overnight at the Hotel Posada Yucay. B/L/D

DAY 4 – MONDAY, AUGUST 10 - YUCAY / OLLANTA / MACHU PICCHU

After an early breakfast, we transfer to the Ollanta Railway Station and board the train for Machu Picchu -- the "Lost city of the Incas." We arrive midmorning at the Aguas Calientes Rail Station and board a minibus for the 2,000-foot climb up the steep winding road to the most memorable Inca site of them all. This impressive ruin, hidden for 400 years by semitropical jungle, lies in a saddle with sheer mountainsides on either side that fall vertically to the Urubamba River far below. Machu Picchu's existence was virtually forgotten until its rediscovery by Hiram Bingham in 1911. As we wander through a maze of empty plazas, chambers and dwellings, we can only guess at what inspired this archaeological wonder. Why was this city built here at the end of the world, how was it constructed, why was it suddenly abandoned by its inhabitants, and how could it have remained hidden for four centuries? Built in the late Imperial Inca style with no evidence of pre- or post-Inca habitation, the site was constructed, occupied and abandoned, all within the span of a century. Our guide points out the significance of various stone structures and discusses some of the theories that have been suggested to solve the mysteries of Machu Picchu. Possible explanations of the site's purpose include: a fortress, the walls and trenches as well as lookout platforms and a drawbridge indicate strong fortifications; a religious center, many of the larger buildings have religious and astronomical significance; an agricultural center, the extensive terraces would have provided much more food than would be required by the estimated population of 1,000. Perhaps the excavation work that is still going on in the area will provide answers to some of these questions, but for now Machu

Picchu remains a mysterious place. Late in the afternoon we transfer back down the mountain to the beautiful **Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel** for dinner and to overnight. B/L/D

DAY 5 – TUESDAY, AUGUST 11- MACHU PICCHU / SNOW WHITE WATER TRAIL / CUSCO

Those who wish may get up very early for either a dawn visit to the archeological site of Machu Picchu (**the entrance fee for this second visit is in addition to the program cost**) or a birding walk along a nearby trail to a breeding lek of the Andean Cock-of-the-Rock (*Rupicola peruviana*). The unmistakable bright orange-red male birds put on quite a show as they display for the drab brown females. After breakfast we set off on a walk through a moist montane forest on the Snow White Water Trail, which winds upwards past unique giant tree ferns, orchids and birds-of-paradise. Birds, such as the Torrent Duck, Mitred Parakeet and Roadside Hawk, are also frequently seen here. Huge rock formations and falling water provide beautiful surroundings for the interesting wildlife of this area. We also visit some ancient thermal baths and a prolific trout farm before returning to the hotel for a delicious Andean-style buffet lunch. In the afternoon we make our way to the railway station in time for the 3:00 PM train to Cusco. Upon arrival in Cusco we are met and transferred to the **Hotel San Agustin El Dorodo** for dinner and to overnight. B/L/D

DAY 6 – WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12 - CUSCO

After breakfast we set out by bus to ascend into the mountains surrounding Cusco. One of our first stops is at the famous amphitheater of Kenko, which is a rare example of curvilinear construction in Inca architecture. Animalistic geometric carvings show animals important to the culture; pumas represented power; condors, justice; and snakes, wisdom. Tambomachay, also known as the Inca Baths, was built around a natural spring and was fortified with military posts and observation decks. It was a royal bathing place used by the Inca and the royal women of the court. High above the city at a height of 12,136 feet, the Inca built a truly amazing structure. Sacsayhuaman is a huge fortress built of massive stones, which zigzags across the side of the mountain. Its shape has been described as representing the teeth of a gigantic puma, of which Cusco is the body. The shape probably would have made surprise attacks almost impossible, but it seems clear that the fortress was still incomplete when the Spanish arrived and it was never finished. Our guide tells us of the history as well as the many legends attached to this site. We also have the opportunity to look for hints of how these immense stones were worked and stacked so perfectly. Following our visit to Sacsayhuaman we have a picnic lunch accompanied by traditional Inca music. In the afternoon we visit several of Cusco's historical sites and have time for shopping in this, the center of Andean culture and handicrafts. In the evening we have reservations at one of Cusco's leading restaurants for a farewell dinner and a colorful program of Andean folklore before returning to our hotel. B/L/D

DAY 7 – THURSDAY, AUGUST 13 CUSCO / LIMA

In the morning we transfer to the airport and fly to Lima where dayrooms have been provided for us at the **Hotel Costa Del Sol, Ramada**. Following lunch at a local restaurant we visit the Gold of Peru Museum (Museo de Oro del Perú). This privately operated museum houses the most magnificent collection of ancient Peruvian gold, ceramic and textile masterpieces in the world. The collection includes monumental necklaces, funerary masks, scepters, ceremonial cups, tumis (sacrificial knives), nose rings, earrings and idols, all fashioned of sumptuous gold and semi-precious stones. The second floor gallery contains marvelous ceramics and textiles and the annex gallery features textiles and feather *mantos* of unbelievable quality. Upstairs from the Gold Museum is the equally fascinating Arms museum, which displays weapons and armor from many cultures. Artifacts from Peru's history, such as items owned by the Pizarro brothers and Simon Bolívar, are also on display. In the evening we depart for La Rosa Nautica, one of Lima's loveliest restaurants. Following a leisurely seafood dinner we transfer to the airport and check in for our flight to the U.S. B/L/D

DAY 8 – FRIDAY, AUGUST 14 - LIMA / U. S.

Our flight arrives back in the U.S. Later in the day we return to our homes with numerous impressions and memories of our visit to the "Heart of the Inca Empire." (B)

B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner; () = an In-flight meal.

*** Please note:** Participation in this travel program requires the ability to walk unimproved rainforest trails, climb steps and get into out of boats. The extension program requires the climbing of numerous steps at altitudes above 12,000'.