

Manu Park Photo Safari & Beyond

Manu National Park - Manu Wildlife Center

Duration 6D/5N

Fixed Departure - Wednesday

This itinerary offers the complete lowland rainforest experience, taking us by air and then motorized canoe to Manu Wildlife Center. This lodge is located east of the Manu River on the north bank of the Madre de Dios River and offers the Amazon's finest, in-depth wildlife safari. The lodge is famous for its abundant and varied wildlife, with its own Tapir clay lick, a nearby macaw clay lick project, an oxbow lake and a tall canopy viewing tower among its impressive highlights. The Lodge contains 22 double-occupancy fully screened private bungalows with hot showers, a large fully screened dining room, and a bar with hammocks for relaxing with the comfort of the our Amazon's finest wildlife and the next day in our rustic, Manu Wildlife Tented Camp in the heart of the Manu Biosphere Reserve. In Manu we navigate the waters of an isolated oxbow lake, home to Giant Otters, caimans, monkeys and an endless variety of birds. Our trip ends downriver with the Amazon's finest wildlife viewing opportunities, at Manu Wildlife Center. This lodge offers the finest Tapir viewing in ALL the Amazon, as Tapirs are nightly visitors to the lodge's mud wallow. After a canoe and van journey we return to Cusco or Lima aboard in a commercial flight.

Itinerary

Day 1: Puerto Maldonado-Colorado -Manu Wildlife Center. Our service begin from 6:00 to 6:30 a.m. with your reception from your hotel followed with a transfer service by van to Santa Rosa Village, we will get there in about two-hours and a half journey, you will cross the Inambari river for a 15 minutes boat trip to Puerto Carlos, here you will start your overland journey to Boca Colorado for 45 minutes by car, followed by four hours and a half motorized boat journey ride upstream the Madre de Dios river. We arrive to Manu Wildlife Center for lunch.

Later we make our first acquaintance with the rainforest, exploring some of the 30 miles of forest trails that surround the lodge. We have an excellent chance of encountering some of the 12 species of monkeys, including the Spider Monkey and Emperor Tamarin, which inhabit the surrounding forest.

After dinner there will be an enchanting night walk along the trails, in search of the nocturnal birds and animals of the rainforest **(L, D)**

Day 2: Manu Wildlife Center to Manu National Park (Manu Wildlife Tented Camp). Another early start (inevitable on wildlife expeditions); a delicious breakfast is followed by boat journey in the motorized canoe trip up the Madre de Dios River. We make a short visit to the village of Boca Manu, riverside capital of the remote and sparsely populated Peruvian province of Fitzcarrald. The main activity here is building dugout boats for travelers on the river, and we see how these sturdy craft are made. Logging is prohibited here, so the resourceful villagers work entirely with lumber brought downriver by floodwaters.

Now we turn northward up the chocolate-brown waters of the Manu River into the lake-rich lower Manu National Park. The pristine quality of the forest is instantly apparent, with abundant birdlife and no signs of outside development. We check into the park at Limonal ranger station and then proceed upstream, as our boat driver steers skillfully through shallows and driftwood snags. Orinoco Geese and Horned Screamers strut on the beaches, Capped and White-necked Herons patrol the shoreline, and countless sunbathing turtles dive off their log perches as we approach.

After some six hours on the river we reach the Manu Tented Camp, a simple but comfortable low-impact lodge nestled almost invisibly in the forest.

Time permitting, we will take a short walk before dinner to stretch our legs and enjoy our first encounter with virgin rainforest. **(B,Box Lunch,D).**

Day 3: Manu National Park (Manu Wildlife Tented Camp): Cocha Salvador & Cocha Otorongo. Today we visit two lakes near our camp. Park authorities determine the time of our visit to Cocha (Lake) Salvador; depending on this schedule, we will visit Cocha Otorongo earlier or later in the day.

Our trail to Cocha Otorongo begins some 30 minutes downstream from the camp. This brief river journey to the trailhead can always offer the chance of a thrilling wildlife sighting. Perhaps we will spot a family of capybaras, the world's largest rodent, looking like giant Guinea Pigs as they browse on the riverbank, or if we are very lucky, a solitary jaguar might stalk slowly off an open beach into the forest, flicking its tail in annoyance at our intrusion.

On the short trail to the lake we may spy one or more of the park's 13 monkey species leaping through the canopy high above. And some of the trees, which form that canopy -- such as kapok, ironwood and figs, will astound us with the vast size of their trunks and buttressed root systems.

There are oxbow lakes, formed when the river changed course, leaving a landlocked channel behind. The lakes are abundant in fish and wildlife, and provide optimum habitat for caimans and the Giant Otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*), one of the Amazon's most endangered mammal species. This lake enjoys maximum protection, and boats are not allowed. However, it features two dock platforms and a 50ft tower from which to scan the trees and marshy shoreline for monkeys, kingfishers, Anhinga (a large, long-necked waterbird), and countless other species. We have a good chance of sighting the resident Giant Otter family as they dive for the 4Kg. of fish that each individual consumes daily.

Cocha Salvador is the largest of the area's lakes, at 3.5 Km, or some two miles long. It is also home to a family of Giant Otters. We cruise the lake on a floating catamaran platform, which offers superb new perspectives of lake and forest. The lakeside trees are often alive with monkeys; Scarlet, Chestnut-fronted and Blue-and-gold macaws beat a path overhead; a variety of herons and egrets scout the water's edge; and the reptilian eyes and snouts of caimans, motionless as logs, may be spied beneath the branches. Somewhere on the open water or in among toppled bankside trees, we may spot the sleek heads of the shy Giant Otters. These social animals play and fish together, and we may see them sprawled on a fallen tree trunk, dozing or gnawing on a fish. **(B,L,D).**

Day 4: Manu National Park (Manu Wildlife Tented Camp): Very early, after breakfast, we will leave our Manu Tented Camp, we reach upstream the Manu River until to Pakitza guard post during about 1 hour. We will explore the pristine nature around Pakitza, also looking for more wildlife doing some activities such as boat rides to search for mammals, caimans, birds, as well as we will explore the forest where birds and mammals are plentiful, but basically we will spend this day searching some jaguars (if we are lucky), overnight at Manu Tented Camp. **(B, box lunch, D).**

Day 5: Manu National Park (Manu Wildlife Tented Camp) to Manu Wildlife Center – Macaw Clay Lick Project and Tapir Clay lick. We set off downriver at dawn. At this hour chances of wildlife encounters are excellent. We return to the Limonal park station, to file our wildlife report before leaving the park. After reaching the turbulent union of the Alto Madre de Dios and Manu Rivers and then the village of Boca Man. After ninety more minutes downstream we arrive at Manu Wildlife Center -- the exciting final stop of our journey -- in time for lunch.

After a delicious lunch we walk through the forest for some minutes, where we find the Macaw Lick project. The hide provided with individual chairs and a convenient place for cameras and binoculars to a distance of 15 meters. In groups of two and three the scarlet Macaws come flapping in, landing in the treetops as they eye the main stage below. Later, we continue to explore and discover the rainforest, its lore and plant life, on the network of trails surrounding the lodge, arriving in the late afternoon at our 34m/112ft Canopy Tower. On its platform we witness the frantic rush-hour activity of twilight in the rainforest canopy, before night closes in.

Then we set off along the "collpa trail", which will take us to the lodge's famous Tapir Clay lick. Here at the most active tapir lick known in all the Amazon, our research has identified from 8-12 individual 600-pound Tapirs who come to this lick to eat clay from under the tree roots around the edge. This unlikely snack absorbs and neutralizes toxins in the vegetarian diet of the Tapir, the largest land animal of Latin America. The lick features a roomy, elevated

observation platform 5m/17ft above the forest floor. The platform is equipped with freshly-made-up mattresses with pillows. Each mattress is covered by a roomy mosquito net. The 10-m-long, elevated walkway to the platform is covered with sound-absorbing padding to prevent our footsteps from making noise. This Tapir Experience is unique and exciting because these normally very shy creatures are visible up close, and flash photography is not just permitted, but encouraged. The hard part for modern city dwellers is to remain still and silent anywhere from 30 minutes to two or more hours. Many prefer to nap until the first Tapir arrives, at which point your guide gently awakens you to watch the Tapir 10-20m/33-66ft) away below the platform. Most people feel that the wait is well worth it in order to have such a high probability of observing the rare and elusive Tapir in its rainforest home. **(B/L/D)**

Day 6: Manu Wildlife Center to Puerto Maldonado – Departure day. We leave our lodge very early on the two hour and a half return boat trip downstream to the Colorado Village. Depending upon the time we must be in Puerto Maldonado, the breakfast will be served at the lodge or on the boat while you enjoying early morning wildlife activity as we go, of course this is a perfect time to take advantage of valuable early morning wildlife activity along the river, in additions this journey allows us to see several lowland native settlements and gold miners digging and panning gold along the banks of the Madre de Dios River. We will stop in the far-west type gold-mining town of Colorado to start our overland journey to Puerto Carlos for 45 minutes, then you will cross the Inambari River for 15 minutes boat trip to Santa Rosa, finally a van or bus will drive us in approximately two-hours and a half to the airport in Puerto Maldonado City, with this assistance your jungle adventure ends... **(B)**

Important notes:

- Please note that you should stay overnight the night before in Puerto Maldonado in order to start your trip from 6:00 to 6:30 a.m.
- The program may vary slightly so as to maximize your wildlife sightings, depending on the reports of our researchers and experienced naturalist guides based at the lodge.
- We strongly recommend read your **PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION**.
- InkaNatura staff can be contacted 24 hours a day on **972 252 655**