



Lake Sandoval, Puerto Maldonado, Peru

Photo: Charles Barr

Revealing the Amazon

The Amazon river runs for some 4,000 miles (6,400 km) in South America and has over a thousand tributaries, 17 of which are longer than 1,000 miles. It discharges about 55 million gallons of water into the Atlantic every second.

The Amazon Rainforest is home to many indigenous tribes, some of which have never been contacted, as well as at least 10% of the planet's biodiversity, 16,000 types of tree, 4,000 species of plants, more than 2,000 different types of fish and 1,300 types of bird, around 2½ million species of insect and hundreds of varieties of amphibians and reptiles. It generates more than 20% of the world's oxygen and covers approximately 40% of the land area of South America. Around a quarter of pharmaceuticals used in modern western medicine use ingredients that originated in the Amazon Rainforest.

On New Year's Day, the BBC broadcasted a programme about the Amazon as the first of their Earth's Great Rivers series. It is available on the BBC iPlayer for 8 months:

Link: <https://bbc.in/2GMid2G>

Threats to the Amazon

The effects of global warming combined with deforestation could have a devastating impact on ecosystems with intensified droughts and irreversible changes to climate. Under the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, Colombia pledged to achieve zero net deforestation in its Amazon region by 2020 and Peru by 2021 whilst Brazil pledged to reduce carbon emissions by 43%, eliminate illegal deforestation in the Amazon and to reforest 12 million hectares by 2030. But the inauguration on 1 January 2019 of Jair Bolsonaro as president of Brazil has set off alarm bells in conservation circles. The following day, in one of his first actions as President, Bolsonaro signed an executive order transferring responsibility for the certification of indigenous land as protected territory to the Ministry of Agriculture. It is expected to result in an increase in deforestation and there may be disastrous consequences for tribal peoples. It is also feared that Bolsonaro may pull Brazil out of the Paris accords.

The Amazon at a Glance - 9 Countries

The Amazon Rainforest covers around 40% of the total land area of South America including more than half of Peru and Brazil, two-thirds of Bolivia, 45% of Ecuador, more than a third of Colombia, around 70% of Guyana, over 90% of French Guiana and Suriname and around 5% of Venezuela.

Did you know?

Travellers often return with great tales of their adventures in the jungle of South America. Sir Walter Raleigh claimed to have encountered a tribe of headless men (but he might have been smoking something at the time) while Francisco de Orellana spoke of a skirmish with a tribe of fierce warrior women – the Amazons of ancient Greek mythology that Herodotus had written about.

Around 145 million years ago, during the Jurassic era when Africa was still connected to South America, the Amazon flowed westwards, the opposite of today. After Africa broke away 100 million years ago, and with the rise of the Andes, the flow was reversed.

Exploring the Amazon

A journey into the Amazon rainforest is quite an adventure, especially for the first time visitor to South America, although we appreciate that of course it is not for everybody. Certainly the feedback we have received over the years from passengers who might have been a bit nervous about going into the jungle is that they find it rewarding to see and hear wildlife in their natural habitat and an altogether interesting experience.

One of the best ways to explore the Amazon jungle is to use a lodge as a base for three or four nights from which to take excursions into the surrounding rainforest. We also book a range of river cruises which explore some of the smaller tributaries of the Amazon. There are various key gateways into the Amazon basin such as Manaus and Alto Floresta in Brazil, Iquitos or Puerto Maldonado in Peru, Coca in Ecuador and Rurrenabaque in Bolivia.

Time of the Year: In general terms, the Amazon receives around 12 feet (3.6m) of rain per annum in tropical downpours which can last a few hours. Not for nothing it is called the rainforest. In fact during the high water season (December to May) you actually get only around 10% more rain than in the low water season (June to November) and you should not let it put you off. It is not as if it is raining all day every day.



Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica (Peru)

Located in 17,000 hectares (65 sq miles) of pristine forest, the Reserva Amazonica has 35 cabañas and offers a choice of half and full day guided excursions including rainforest walks, trails and river excursions. They also offer a 30m high canopy walkway for wildlife spotting from the treetops. Highly recommended.

Getting here: 1 hour from Puerto Maldonado.



Posada Amazonas (Peru)

Posada Amazonas is owned by the Ese Eja indigenous community located within their pristine reserve, next to the Tambopata National Reserve and managed in partnership with Rainforest Expeditions. The lodge has 12 superior rooms, 16 comfort suites and 2 suites and offers good excursions for a great introduction to the jungle.

Getting here: 2 hours from Puerto Maldonado



Corto Maltes (Peru)

The Corto Maltes Amazonia Lodge has just 27 wooden bungalows on stilts in the Tambopata rainforest on the River Madre de Dios near Lake Sandoval. All activities and excursions are included but the order of services may change depending on weather conditions. Good reports from passengers.

Getting here: 1 hour from Puerto Maldonado.



Refugio Amazonas (Peru)

This is a luxurious lodge set in a 200-hectare private reserve within the buffer zone of the Tambopata National Reserve. The Refugio has 32 rooms (14 superior, 14 comfort, 4 suites) and a 30m Canopy Tower. We recommend a visit to Lake Tres Chimbadas, home to a family of giant otters. Ideal for a three or four night introduction to the Amazon.

Getting here: 1 hour by road, 2½ hours by motorized riverboat.



Inkaterra Hacienda Concepcion (Peru)

Located 8km down the Madre de Dios river from Puerto Maldonado. The Hacienda has 19 bungalows and 6 family rooms. We recommend an excursion to the Cachuela clay lick and to the serene Lake Sandoval. Children might be interested in their Brazil nut experience. Excellent guides & services.

Getting here: 45 minutes from P. Maldonado.



Tambopata Research Centre (Peru)

This is the only lodge located deep within the Tambopata National Reserve and you will have to spend at least one night at the Refugio Amazonas on the way here. Guests often sight jaguar and have access to two important clay licks. There are a total of 24 rooms (8 Superior, 8 Comfort, 4 Suites 4 Deluxe).

Getting here: 4 hours from Refugio Amazonas.





Sacha Lodge (Ecuador)

Built in 1992 and set in a 5000-acre private nature reserve, the Sacha Lodge now has 26 comfortable rooms. The lodge has a 43m observation tower and a tree top walkway 36m off the ground. The Yasuni parrot lick is nearby. Around 600 species of birds have been recorded here.

Getting here: 15 minutes by road from Coca and 2 hours by motorised canoe.



Napo Wildlife Centre (Ecuador)

This award-winning lodge provides full board and a range of excursions and activities including excellent bird-watching, a 40 m viewing tower, forest trails and parrot clay-licks. It is operated by and for the Kichwa Añangu Community and has just 20 cabins.

Getting here: 2 hours by motorised canoe, a short walk and then by hand-paddled canoe.



La Selva (Ecuador)

La Selva Amazon Ecolodge has 19 cabins in an ideal location on the border of Yasuni National Park, a premier site for bird-watching. Their observation tower rises 38m and we recommend visitors take an excursion to the parrot clay lick.

Getting here: short drive from Coca, 2 hours by motorized canoe & by paddle canoe.



Amazon Eco-Lodge (Brazil)

This is a floating lodge 80 km from Manaus in a 790-hectare area of primary rainforest on Juma Lake. Guests are practically guaranteed to see pink dolphins and itineraries include the confluence of the Rio Negro with the Rio Solimoes in the upper Amazon. The lodges 26 rooms are fairly basic.

Getting here: 3½ hours in a series of road and boat journeys from Manaus.



Cristalino Lodge (Brazil)

There are 18 rooms and 5 suites at this luxury eco-lodge in the far south of the Brazilian Amazon beside the calm waters of the Cristalino River. The lodge has two 50 metre high observation towers at different points within the reserve. A total of 586 species of birds have been recorded here. Highly recommended.

Getting here: 1½ hours from Alta Floresta.



Anavilhanas Jungle Lodge (Brazil)

Anavilhanas is a remote property, 180 km from Manaus. The lodge has 16 standard cottages, 4 superior bungalows and 2 excellent panoramic bungalows providing unusual levels of comfort in the rainforest. Good opportunities to see pink dolphins and visit a Rio Negro indigenous community.

Getting here: approx. 3 hours from Manaus (fixed schedules) or 35 minutes by private seaplane.



Alter do Chão (Brazil)

For something completely different, how about a beautiful inland beach, 500km from the coast, with white sand and warm freshwater of Tapajós River in the middle of the Amazon, just 38 km from Santarém?

The dry season (July to December) is the best time to go. Please contact us to discuss accommodation.

Getting here: 50 minutes from Santarém



Ilha do Marajo (Brazil)

This island is 90 km from Belem and is the size of Switzerland. Most of the roads are unpaved, water buffaloes outnumber humans and are used for everything including transport for the local policemen. There are sandy beaches, 4 eco-systems and a legacy of beautiful pottery from the pre-Colombian Marajoara culture. Quirky.

Getting here: 3 hours from Belem



Juma Lodge (Brazil)

Juma Lodge is located 100 km southeast of Manaus in a fully preserved area of 17,300 acres. The lodge has 18 eco-friendly bungalows constructed on stilts, six of which have rainforest views, 12 are riverfront. In addition there is one panoramic king-sized suite. Good reports.

Getting here: Approx 3 hours from Manaus via the Meeting of the Waters.



Madidi (Bolivia)

This is a low-impact jungle eco-lodge in the heart of Madidi National Park with a network of 40 km of trails. Accommodation is fairly basic and only four of the ten rooms have private bathrooms. Guides are highly-experienced and there are estimated to be more than 1,100 bird species here. There are 5 nearby salt licks. We recommend a visit to Santa Rosa Lake if time permits. Good value.

Getting here: 3 hours by motorized riverboat from Rurrenabaque.



Chalalán (Bolivia)

Chalalán Ecolodge stands on the shore of the magnificent Chalalán Lagoon in a remote part of Madidi National Park, one of the most bio-diverse places on earth. There are 14 cabins (although only 10 have private bathrooms). Chalalán provides a bilingual guide for every six passengers. Excursions include night walks and canoe-trips.

Getting here: 5½ hours by motorized riverboat from Rurrenabaque then 25 minutes' walk.



The Manatee (Ecuador)

The M/V Manatee Amazon Explorer has just 10 standard cabins and 4 suites for a maximum of 30 guests to experience unparalleled adventures in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

Choose between 3 nights, 4 nights and 7 night itineraries to explore parts of the Amazon in style.

Embarkation: Approximately 1½ hours by motorized canoe from Coca airport to reach the Manatee.



Aria Amazon (Peru)

The Aria Amazon has just 16 beautifully designed suites, each of which has a floor to ceiling window. Itineraries include off-ship excursions in groups of 8, each led by experienced local naturalist guides. Superb cuisine.

The Aria Amazon offers journeys of three, four or seven nights to explore some of the tributaries of the mighty Amazon from Iquitos.

Gateway: Iquitos. Transfers will vary according to flight times.



Iberostar Grand Amazon (Brazil)

This is a floating hotel with 72 elegant and comfortable cabins and 2 large royal suites over three decks, ideal for passengers who wish to have a taster of the Amazon in some comfort and style.

The Iberostar Grand Amazon operates 4-day, 5-day and 8-day journeys with arrivals/departures on Mondays and Fridays.

Gateway: Manaus. Transfer times will vary according to flight timings and days.



Caribbean and Amazon: Seven Seas

Highlights: Miami – St Barts – Guadalupe – Grenada – Trinidad & Tobago – Amazon River – Santarem (Amazon) – Boca da Valeria (Amazon) – Manaus (Amazon) – Parintins (Amazon) – Barbados – Antigua – Havana (Cuba) – Miami

15 Nov 2020: 26 Days from £7,539 pp (transatlantic flights are included in economy)

Gateway: Miami

Revealed Travel

Revealed Travel are dedicated to promoting travel to some of the world's most exciting destinations with a team of specialists who have considerable experience and know-how in putting together tailor-made itineraries for our passengers.

The Revealed Travel group is owned by Mercator Enterprises. ABTA and ATOL protected.

Further Information and News

We are grateful to everyone who came to see us at the Destinations Shows in Manchester and in London.

We will be exhibiting at the Telegraph Travel Show in London in September and at the Wildlife and Safari Show in Harrogate in October. Please contact us to make an appointment:

enquiries@revealedtravel.co.uk

Brexit Update

We are watching developments closely with interest. Please see the Government Contingency Planning in the event of No Deal: <https://bit.ly/2TwUV21>

Travellers should expect some disruption to flights and at borders. Please see our recent blog: <https://revealedtravel.co.uk/brexit/>

