



Eco Amazonia Lodge in Madre de Dios, Peru

We offer to the visitor the extraordinary opportunity to be in contact with nature and to enjoy the exotic and wonderful places that the Peruvian Amazon contains. Few are the places in the world where nature is shown as splendid and abundant as in the Amazon Forest of Peru. Here, there are a conjunction of vibrant forests, impetuous and mighty rivers, immense swamps and marshes that conform an exuberant ecosystem where the life is manifested in almost all its forms.

Amid this wonderful place, in an area of 10,000 hectares, is located the natural ecological reservation ECOAMAZONIA LODGE, in an area known as The Tambopata, 30 km far from Puerto Maldonado by the River Bajo Madre de Dios. Go into this wonderful place and contemplate the bustling and cheerful flocks of parrots as well as those more than 1200 species of birds. Also, you can delight your view with the 700 types of butterflies and you will be able to cohabit with hundreds of animal species that look for refuge in the heart of the Amazonian. ECOAMAZONIA LODGE invites you to go aboard in a spectacular trip that will revolutionize your senses. Besides that, you will be collaborating through the sustainable ecotourism, for the conservation of this beautiful reservation. Don't think about it more!. Escape from the worldly noise and go into the deepest Amazon!. Be part of Nature again!

Dossier Note

This Dossier was last updated as per the version date above. The itinerary and other details may change over time so they may differ slightly from the brochure or may change between the date of dossier printing and the start date of your trip. Any further amendments will be advised to you at the start of your tour.

Arrival Instructions

Jorge Chavez International Airport in Callao Lima is approximately a 45-minute drive from the Miraflores district, where most of the main hotels are located. The easiest way to get there is via taxi. Immediately passing after the customs and immigration area, as you head to the exits, you will find a taxi stand; is not recommendable to take a taxi, under any circumstances, out of the passenger's restricted area. You can pay for the car at set rates (about \$20 USD) and won't need to worry about sorting out a ride outside the airport facilities, where the situation tends to get more chaotic, with many drivers vying for few clients. There is money exchange facilities open 24 hours in the Arrivals area. If you are arriving from abroad and have paid in advance for an arrival transfer, an Aurora Travel CO. representative will meet you at the airport. If no one is there, wait for a prudential time, we always are there but the chaos may us seem lost; do not take a public taxi, just go downward your steps and take an official taxi in the restricted area; we will reimburse you. If you have not paid for an arrival transfer, the best way to get into town is by public taxi. If your taxi driver does not speak English and you do not speak Spanish, simply show driver the hotel address to simplify communications. Please note that Day 1, in some tours, is an arrival day and no activities are planned for that day so you may arrive at any time. However, we strongly recommend that you arrive in Lima early on Day 1, as this will give you the opportunity to rest and see a little of Lima before heading south Cusco. The last day is a departure day in which no activities have been planned.

Your leader will contact you at the hotel on Day 1 and make sure you are settled comfortably. If you arrive late, s/he will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning. Your Tour Leader will also organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip.

Local Emergency Contact

Contact in Lima: Calle Tarapaca 226 Miraflores, Lima, Tel: Int. Dialing Code + 51 1 996992336

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact Aurora Travel CO. during a situation of dire need, we have 2 mobile lines which will connect you directly with our on duty manager during the 24 hours. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so we may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

Our 2 mobile lines are: 996992336 and 999067727.



Itinerary

ECO AMAZONIA LODGE

Tour Length: 04 days / 03 nights

Activities: Outdoor, Ecological, Moderate Trekking, Visit to Indian Village

Spots to visit: Tambopata National Reserve

NATIVE COMMUNITY OF PALMA REAL 4 d / 3 n

DAY 1: MONKEY ISLAND You will arrive at Puerto Maldonado, the biodiversity capital of Peru. After a reception at the airport, you will ride to the city center by bus. You will depart from the port and travel down the Madre de Dios River. During the trip you will see caimans, turtles, herons and other species of animals along the riverbanks. When you arrive to the ECOAMAZONIA LODGE, you will be served an exquisite welcome drink, after which you will have time to settle in to your bungalows and eat lunch.

In the afternoon, with our specialized guide, you will visit Monkey Island, which is only 5 minutes from the Lodge. During your hike through the island you will observe extraordinary scenery and exuberant flora that shelters a tremendous variety of monkeys in their natural habitat, such as the Black Spider Monkey, Capuchin Monkey, Tamarins, Squirrel Monkeys, and the South American Coati, as well as a number of bird species. You will complete your visit to Monkey Island by enjoying the sunset, and then returning to the Lodge for dinner.

DAY 2: COCHA PERDIDA After breakfast you begin your guided adventure through the virgin rainforest on foot to the Cocha Perdida. The Cocha Perdida is a protected ecosystem sustaining an immense variety of animals such as giant otters, caimans, turtles, Brazilian tapirs "sachavacas", colorful birds, the majestic jaguar, and diverse fish species. This area is a unique part of the Ecoamazonia Reserve, because its immense swamps and marshes still remain fully intact today. Later, you will arrive at our extraordinary Amazon Watch Tower, built at the top of an immense tree (the Shihuahuaco) from which you can appreciate the full and magical beauty of the rainforest. You will also go for a pleasant canoe ride around the lake, after which you will return to the Lodge for lunch. In the afternoon there is another canoe trip down the river to visit a local family living in the rainforest. Finally, you will return to the Lodge for dinner.

Day 3: PALMA REAL After breakfast, you will travel on the Madre de Dios River for approximately 2 hours, where you will see a variety of flora and fauna along the way. Later, you will arrive at the indigenous Amazon community of Palma Real – a semi-civilized group of people living in the rainforest who still practice ancient customs, rituals, and who follow jungle myths. These native Huarayos and their land are filled with ancient secrets. The people of Palma Real are dedicated to fishing, hunting and gathering, and selling their original native artwork. With our expert guide you will learn about their life and how they mark their time using the sun, the moon, and the water. Their message is that humans, plants, animals, and rivers are integrated into one world. You will then travel by boat around the area of Palma Real and enjoy the natural beauty of the landscape while enjoying lunch onboard. Finally, you will return to the Lodge for dinner.

DAY 4: Breakfast. Transfer to the Puerto Maldonado airport.

INCLUSIONS

- *Transfer from/to the airport in Puerto Maldonado
- *Accommodation in bungalows
- *All meals
- *Bilingual guided excursions

RATES 2008



- EXTRA DAY: WITH EXCURSION TOUR - US\$ 80.00 WITHOUT EXCURSION – US\$ 70.00
 - Rates Per Passenger Quoted in US \$ DOLLARS

Single Room :	Price is increased by 30% over published rate						
Tour Conductor :	Free of Charge per every 15 passengers. Lodged in shared double room						
Children :	From 2 to 10 years of age are given a 50% discount on published rate						
Services :	Reception at Puerto Maldonado Airport and Transfer to Town						
Recommendations :	Luggage: In Puerto Maldonado there are no porters; likewise, our boats and crafts possess limited capacity. Consequently, only one piece of luggage is allowed per person. Bring lightweight cotton clothes, long sleeved shirts, long pants, hat, jacket, raingear, sun glasses, insect repellent, swimsuit, binoculars, flashlight-torch, personal medications.						
Reservations and Payment :	Reservations can be held valid until one month prior to arrival. At that point a 50% prepayment is required for confirmation. Remnant due to be cancelled upon arrival.						
Cancellations :	If a confirmed reservation is cancelled, it will be subject to a charge according to the following <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Working days(before)</th> <th>Charge</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>07 – 15</td> <td>25% of the final price agreed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>05 or less</td> <td>50% of the final price agreed</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Working days(before)	Charge	07 – 15	25% of the final price agreed	05 or less	50% of the final price agreed
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Liabilities and Disclaim :	Eco Amazonia Lodge is not responsible for flight cancellations due to mechanical reasons, weather, itinerary changes. Our services begin upon arrival in Puerto Maldonado Airport.						

RATES AND PRICES 2008

CODE	PROGRAM	DURACION	1/9 PAX	10 OR MORE
General Programs :				
EA01	ECO JUNGLE	2 days / 1 nights	US\$ 140.00	US\$ 135.00
EA02	ECO MÁGIC	3 days / 2 nights	US\$ 190.00	US\$ 185.00
EA03	ECO LÓGICAL	3 days / 2 nights	US\$ 210.00	US\$ 205.00
EA04	ECO ADVENTURE	4 days / 3 nights	US\$ 250.00	US\$ 245.00
EA06	ECO PARADÍSE	5 days / 4 nights	US\$ 320.00	US\$ 315.00
Special Programs (Minimum 04 pax):				
EA05	NATIVE COMMUNITY	4 days / 3 nights	US\$ 280.00	US\$ 275.00
EA07	ECO-COLLEPA-OF GUACAMAYOS	5 days / 4 nights	US\$ 420.00	US\$ 315.00
EA08	ECO ESOTERICISM	4 days / 3 nights	US\$ 270.00	US\$ 265.00
EA09	ECO BIRD WATCHING	3 days / 2 nights	US\$ 260.00	US\$ 255.00
CODIGO	PROGRAMA	DURACION	2 A 9 PAXS	GRUPOS 10+

- EXTRA DAY: WITH EXCURSION TOUR - US\$ 110.00 WITHOUT EXCURSION – US\$ 100.00
 - Rates Per Passenger Quoted in US \$ DOLLARS



**The entrance fee to Tambopata National Reserve (TNR) is not included (\$ 10.00 aprox.)
Transfers in Cusco Apt/Htl/Apt are not included.**

For additional programs and tours please mail to:

[mailto:nellyw@auroracotravel.com?subject=More information required](mailto:nellyw@auroracotravel.com?subject=More%20information%20required)

General Conditions and Policy

Rates and Tour prices

All rates are quoted in US Dollars and are based on tariffs, cost and rates of exchange known in December 2008 and expected to be in effect at time of departure. Accordingly they are subject to increase without notice if such rates change prior to departure. Circuits tours price include costs of planning, communications, administration and documentation. An additional handling of US 10.00 charge will apply when the reservation only involve airline ticketing. All rates are per person except in Hotels Rates section where rates are per room.

Reservations

An e-mail to info@auroracotravel.com is required to make any reservation; you must specify names and last names and passport number, nationality and age. For trips booking during high season (From June through end of November) is highly recommended to made reservations with a minimum of 5-15 days prior to departure. For groups during high season bookings must be done with a minimum of 45 days. For individual travelers during low season reservations may be done with 24 hrs in advance at our nellyw@auroracotravel.com office.

Deposits and Payments

Is not required any payment at time of booking, however we will require the full payment prior arrival, unless agree in other conditions.

WE DO NOT ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS OR PERSONAL CHECKS UNDER ANY CONCEPT.

Money transfer cost will be at passengers account.

Cancellations

Refunds will be made for written cancellations received up to 30 days prior to departure.

30 days-15 days prior to departure 30 %

14 days-1 day prior to departure 50 %

On departure day and No-Show, no refund will be made under any concept.

Amendments

A fee of US \$ 15 for extra handling is charge if passengers amend arrangements, held or cancel and rebook for another departure.

Refunds

Due the high cost of handling and processing, no refunds are paid for any unused portions of the tour if passengers amend or delete any arrangements during the operation of any tour. If any refunds may be due because of circumstances beyond the control of the tour operator or the passenger, application must be lodged within 30 days of return. No refunds will be made for occasional missed meals or sightseeing tours.

Refunds are made on the basis of cost of services not used and not on per day basis. There are not refunds, under any concept, for missed bus tickets. Air ticketing refunds are under the airline policy. Hotels have they own refund policy and refunds will be under this policy.

Inclusions

In case of tour packages are included all land transport where explicitly specified, bilingual guides, entrance fees, sightseeing and transfers where specified. Twin - bedded accommodations with private bath and shower will be provided at hotels listed. If a change becomes necessary for any reason, hotels substitute will be the equivalent of those selected. The prices for single room are listed with the prices of each itinerary as the item SWB. Note, however, that single rooms may occasionally be less comfortable than twins. Single rooms are not available with adventure tours. All hotels listed on the tours are including standard hotel Breakfast. Meals are included as specified in each itinerary. Hotels services charges and Tax are included. Outdoor trips are including all gear camp, all meals, porters, transport, first aid kit.

**Not included**

Air ticketing, airport departure taxes, tips to local guides, any liquor or wines or beverages stocked in hotel minibars, laundry, phones calls, excess baggage charges, optional excursions or other item of personal nature, personal insurance of any kind.

Aurora Travel CO. - Liability

Aurora Travel CO. and / or their agents and / or supplier of services pursuant to or in connection with these itineraries shall act only as agents for the passengers in making arrangements for hotels, transportation, restaurants or airlines. Aurora Travel CO. shall not assume any liability for any injury, damage, death, loss or delay to any passenger or its property due to an act of God or default of any hotel, airline or land transportation company or person rendering the services included in the purchased tour. Aurora Travel CO. will not assume any expenses due to flight cancellation, strikes, or amendments due to passengers' will. Aurora Travel CO. shall be not responsible for any loss or damage to the passengers or their properties caused by supernatural forces, fires, shortcomings of machineries or equipments, government actions or authorities; wars- are they or not declared- hostilities, civil disturbances, strikes, robbery, looting, deceits, swindles, epidemics, quarantines, delays or cancellations, change of itineraries or schedules. Aurora Travel CO. or anyone of their subsidiary or affiliated companies shall be not become responsible for any additional expense or responsibility in which the passenger incurs as consequence of anyone of the mentioned causes. Aurora Travel CO. declares expressly that it only acts as an agent among the travelers and the entities and the people in charge to render the services; consequently it declines all responsibility for the following deficiencies that may will present in anyone of the rendered services, or any kind of irregularities that may take place during the execution of the services such as: flights delays, connection impossibility, over- bookings in airlines or hotels, neither for any accident, damage, wound or death. When the trip is carried out in vehicles belonging to thirds, in the event of accident the passengers will undergo expressly to the legislation as regards accidents of the country where it occurs and where is registered the vehicle. The airlines, cruises or terrestrial companies intervening in the execution of the programs are the only ones responsible for such events that may occur while the passengers are on board of their respective vehicles. When the passengers appreciate in site the non - execution or the bad execution of the purchased services must notify it in writing immediately in the term of 48 hours to Aurora Travel CO., otherwise it will suppose that the passenger is who should prove the non fulfillment of the contract to a competent Tribunal. In the event of strike on the part of one or more of the suppliers Aurora Travel CO. commits to carry out all the efforts in benefit to the affected passengers, being the economic incidences that could be to the sole account of the passengers. The sole fact of a booking and / or the issuance of tickets, travel vouchers or / and coupons imply the total observance of the passenger in all respects of these terms and conditions.

Fitness & Mobility

Aurora Travel CO. small group tours bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an 'average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Passengers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage. Travelers over the age of 60 are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that senior travelers have the



necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen program. Our tour leaders work hard to ensure that all our travelers are catered for equally; please note that it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided.

TRIP PREPARATION

Please contact your physician, or travel clinic for the most up-to-date health requirements. All countries require a valid passport (with minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy, or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. **IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO HAVE THE CORRECT TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION.**

Health

We recommend you contact your family physician, or your local travel clinic for the most up-to-date health information at least one month before departure. Travelers should also carry a basic first-aid kit. Proof of Yellow Fever inoculation will be required before you depart for the Amazon. You should be aware that there is a 10 to 15 day period before the inoculation becomes fully effective.

Safety and Security

Travelers must exercise common sense and caution at all times. Tourists should stick to set travel arrangements and avoid unknown areas. Always keep a photocopy of your passport, airline tickets and a record of your travelers' checks and credit card numbers separate from where you keep the originals.

What to Take

You will be on the move a lot, so our advice is to pack as lightly as possible. Your baggage should be clearly labeled and restricted to one soft compact suitcase, or sports bag, maximum 15kg, plus a daypack. Luggage limits on airlines are strictly enforced and space on vehicles is limited. Porters are not often available, so be prepared to carry your own bags. Most people automatically assume that the weather is hot in South America, but because of the higher altitude in the Andes, the temperature can feel quite cold, especially at night. We recommend the use of a duffel bag or backpack, whichever is easiest for you to carry. A good size daypack is also essential.

Suggested Items:

- Fleece top
- Windproof/waterproof jacket
- Small towel and swim wear
- 4 shirts and t-shirts
- Sun hat
- 1 pair of shorts
- 2 pairs of long trousers
- 1 pair hiking pants/track pants
- Hiking boots/ sturdy walking shoes
- Sport sandals

- Sun block
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (biodegradable)
- Watch or alarm clock
- Water bottle
- Purification tablets or filters
- Flashlight
- Money Belt
- First-aid kit (should contain lip salve, Aspirin, Band Aids, anti-histamine, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, re-hydration powder, extra prescription drugs you may be taking).

Also recommended for this trip:

- Inner sheet (for sleeping bag)
- Wool hat, mitts or gloves (preferably waterproof)
- Rain poncho
- Strong plastic bags to help keep gear dry
- Sleeping bag (this can also be hired locally for approx. \$10 USD)



- Mattress (a foam mattress is included as part of the hike; self inflating type mattresses are available for hire)
- Anti-inflammatory tablets (e.g. Ibuprofen)
- Thermal underwear

All other camping equipment for the Inca Trail hike is provided and included in the cost of the excursion. Porters carry the gear, so you will only be responsible for carrying your daypack. But please be aware there are weight limits on what the porters can carry, thus every passenger is limited to 7 kg, including sleeping bags.

Optional Items:

Camera and film, reading/writing material, binoculars, cover for backpacks, pocket knife

Documents:

- Passport (with photocopies)
- Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- Airline tickets (with photocopies)
- USD cash and travelers cheques
- Credit or debit card (see personal spending money)
- INXS vouchers, pre-departure information and dossier
- Any entry visas or vaccination certificates required

SPENDING MONEY

How much money you take is obviously a personal matter. If you intend to purchase many souvenirs, or if you enjoy dining out, we would recommend that you take much more than the suggested daily average.

Credit cards and debit cards are very useful for cash advances. Visa cards are the most widely accepted cards. While ATMs are widely available, there are no guarantees that your credit or debit cards will actually work in Latin America. Check with your bank. You should be aware that to purchase products or services on a credit card a fee of 5%-10% usually applies.

Do not rely on credit or debit cards as your only source of money, a combination of US dollar cash, travelers' cheques and cards is best. Always take more rather than less, as you don't want to spoil the trip by constantly feeling short of funds.

Paying Locally

Some of our adventure tours involve a local payment. Paying locally allows us to keep the overall cost of our tours competitive and pass the savings on to you. These funds are put towards local expenses. In some developing countries the transferring of funds is at times problematic so this is a way to help us serve you whilst saving you money. Payment is to be made to your leader upon arrival.

Tipping

Tipping is an expected - though not compulsory - component of your tour program and an expression of satisfaction with the persons who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers. You may do this individually, or your Tour Leader will offer to collect the money and tip as a group. Also at the end of each trip, if you felt your Aurora Travel CO. Tour Leader did an outstanding job, tipping is always appreciated.

Budget

Departure Tax - \$28 USD, local flights airport tax USD \$ 5

Optional Activities

Optional activity prices are subject to change and can fluctuate in relation to the high/low season and the number of people on a specific excursion. Not all excursions listed here may be available, due to season, or weather conditions. As generally not a lot of time is spent in start/end cities, you may want to arrange to arrive early, or stay longer after the trip in order to allow sufficient time to participate in optional activities there.

All prices are per person in US dollar amounts.



SOME HISTORY AND TRIP NOTES

Founded by Francisco Pizarro, on the Day of the Three Kings (Epiphany) in 1535, Lima is known as the City of Kings. It is Peru's capital city and as such, deserves a visit. The Plaza de Armas is the heart of old Lima and there you'll find the Cathedral, Government Palace and Archbishop's Palace. The Cathedral dates back to the 1700s and houses the remains of the conquistador Pizarro. To get a feel for colonial Lima, take a cab to the Plaza de Armas and watch the changing of the Palace Guard in the afternoon. Walk around the streets surrounding the Jirón de la Union, for great examples of Spanish-colonial architecture and to experience life in a large South American city.

There are many fine museums in and around the city, including the Museo Rafael Larco Herrera, which houses an equally impressive collection of pottery, mummies and textiles from the Paracas and Nazca cultures. An optional city tour visits many of the city's highlights.

The more affluent coastal districts of Miraflores, Barranco and San Isidro offer good night life and cafés. The Limeños are friendly and the city's many interesting museums, churches, markets, restaurants and night life will surely entice you. Seafood lovers should be sure and try a ceviche, for which Lima is well known. NOTE: Care should be taken when wandering around on your own in central Lima as some areas can be dangerous and pickpockets are daring.

Pisco is just a few hours south from Lima, along the Pan American Highway. It gives its name to the white grape brandy produced in the region and is a fairly important port town. If you haven't tried the national drink, Pisco Sour, then this is the place to do it. While the town itself is of considerable historical and archaeological interest, we also use it as a starting point for an optional visit to the Ballestas Islands, where you may observe the sea lion colonies, penguins and a variety of other birds.

The pleasant colonial town of Ica enjoys a dry sunny climate and is known for its huge sand dunes, which we visit on the way to Nazca. Apart from the dunes, the town is well known for its wines and there are several wineries and distilleries in the area.

The entire coastal desert area was also once the home for the Paracas and the Nazca cultures, which preceded the Incas by more than half a millennia. Remains of the Nazca culture are still visible during an optional tour of an ancient desert cemetery site, which also includes a visit to a pottery workshop. Further along, the road climbs slightly and we rise above the coastal mist to find one of the world's greatest archaeological mysteries, the lines of Nazca, an area of flat desert crisscrossed by lines, patterns, and pictures drawn in the sand. Some of these are as long as 10 km. Others depict birds and animals that are only recognizable from the air. Who drew the lines, and why, is something that modern archaeologists can only guess at. Current theories suggest that they may be part of a complex agricultural calendar. The best way to view the lines is from a light aircraft, with an optional flight. Flights are easily arranged and generally depart early in the morning, when the contrast in color on the desert is most striking.

Peru's second most important city is Arequipa, which maintains a traditional colonial style and more laid back pace in comparison to the capital. Built from a very light colored volcanic rock called sillar, the older buildings dazzle in the sun, thus the nickname, "the White City." The main plaza, with its cafés and nearby cathedral, is a top draw for visitors. Those with an interest in history and architecture can take an optional visit to the Convent of Santa Catalina. The Convent offers a brief respite from the outside world and a unique view into a by-gone way of life. Spectacular mountains surround Arequipa, the most famous of which is El Misti Volcano, at 5822 m (19096 ft) and with a beautiful snow-capped peak. The surrounding villages also deserve a visit where we can see first hand the traditions of the people of this region.

En route to see the Colca Canyon, we relax in the town of Chivay for two nights and have time to visit the local thermal baths (optional). The drive to Chivay is remarkable because of the extensive Inca and pre-Inca terracing that go on for kilometers. Once at the Canyon, with a little luck, we will be able to see condors and possibly 3 different species of camels, including alpacas, llamas and vicuñas. . The viewing area is a natural "Mirador" (scenic lookout), where we look out over the river flowing 1200m (3936 ft) below. A scenic journey over the Andes, takes us to Puno. When we arrive in Puno, you may be affected by the altitude which is 3830m (12562 ft)). It may take a little time to acclimatize to this, but before long you probably will not even notice it. Just take it easy for the first day or two, and cut back on alcohol and cigarette consumption to minimize the symptoms. You may also find that your appetite is reduced. This is no cause for alarm; it is just a reaction to the altitude. Be sure to drink plenty of water and do not attempt too much in any given day.

Puno is the place, at the highest altitude of any that we visit. As a result the weather can also be extreme with very cold nights, and dry hot days. There is not a lot to see in Puno itself, however there are several good spots offering scenic views of Lake Titicaca and the town. Puno is also known for its wealth of traditional



dances. There are up to 100 different varieties, usually performed in the street processions celebrating Catholic feast days. You may see these celebrations if you're fortunate enough to be visiting at the appropriate time. A popular optional activity in Puno is a visit to the spectacular chullpas (funerary towers) of Sillustani, a pre-Inca archeological site.

Lake Titicaca, at 3820m (12529 ft), is often touted as the highest navigable lake in the world. However this is not entirely true. It is simply the best known. Nevertheless, measuring 170 km (106 miles) in length, it is the largest lake in South America and is also the largest lake in the world, above 2000m (6560 ft).

The views from both Amantani and Taquile Islands are stunning. Our first stop on Lake Titicaca is the floating islands of the Uros people. The Uros began their unusual floating existence centuries ago in an effort to isolate themselves from the Collas and the Incas.

Sadly the Uros language has died out and today they speak Aymara due to the intermarriage with Aymara-speakers. Today about 300 people live on the islands, however their numbers are slowly declining. The Totora reeds, which grow in the shallows of the lake, are used for making everything from the islands themselves to the model boats that the islanders sell. The islands are made up of layers upon layers of reeds. As the layer

closest to the water start to rot, they are replaced with fresh reeds on top. They also use the reeds to build their boats, which if constructed well, will last up to 6 months.

Taquile is rich in culture. The peoples' unique style of dress and lifestyle will definitely make for a memorable visit. You'll see the men of the community doing all the knitting, as this is strictly a male domain, while the women do the spinning. High quality, locally knitted goods are available for purchase at various cooperatives on the island. Despite the short distance that separates the two islands, Amantani is quite distinct. Its soil is a rich terra cotta red, due to the high iron deposits, which contrasts brightly with the deep azure blue of the lake and sky, and greenery of the local crops. For the night we split into smaller groups and billet into family homes to learn about their style of living. From Puno we will take either a local bus or train around Lake Titicaca and through the Altiplano to the Inca capital of Cusco.

Cusco is the hub of the South American travel network. The city attracts thousands of travelers who come not just to visit a unique destination but also to experience an age-old culture that is very different from their 21st century way of life. One could easily spend a week just in and around this area. Cusco is the continent's oldest continuously inhabited city. Inca built stone walls line most of the central streets and you don't have to go far to see other Inca ruins, as it is a city steeped in history, tradition, and legend. Cusco's numerous colonial churches are one of the most common sights, the main one being the Cathedral. It was started in 1559 and took 100 years to build. It is also one of the city's greatest repositories of colonial art. Immediately in front of the entrance is a vault containing the remains of the famous Inca historian, Garcilazo de la Vega. Also worth visiting, are the churches of La Compañía, La Merced and San Francisco.

While most ruins are just outside of the city, the main ruin within, is that of the Koricancha, once the Inca Empire's richest temple. This ruin forms the base of the colonial church of Santo Domingo. During Inca times, this temple was literally covered with gold, but within months of the arrival of the first conquistadors, this incredible wealth had all been melted down. It is left to the individual imagination to envision the magnificence of the original structure. There are several good museums in Cusco, including the Archaeological Museum, which also houses a small art museum, the Regional History Museum, and the Religious Art Museum. The best advice in exploring Cusco is to wear a comfortable pair of shoes, armed with a city map, and set off to explore! Among the more adventurous optional activities available in Cusco include; horseback riding around archeological sites such as Sacsayhuaman, Tambo Machay, Puca Pucara, whitewater rafting on the Urubamba, and mountain biking down to the Sacred Valley, and perhaps visiting an Inca ruin along the way. For those interested in a challenging but worthwhile hike, the Inca Trail is exceptional; however you must be prepared for it! It is a 40-km (25 mile) hike, which takes 3 full days to complete. There are 3 high passes to be crossed, one of which reaches an elevation of 4200m (13776 ft). The trail is often steep, and it may rain even during the dry season. The temperatures at night may fall below zero, so it is important to come prepared. The scenery in this part of the Andes is breathtaking and you will enjoy the views from every corner you turn. There is no way to describe the feeling of the first views of Choquequirao, as the mist rises off the mountains early in the morning and the famous ruin appears in front of you. We usually begin the hike at km82. Porters will carry a lot of the gear for the hike, so those passengers doing the hike will only have to carry a small daypack with water, rain gear, snacks, a camera, etc. As you begin the hike you will be passing smaller ruin sites the first of which is Llactapata. The second day you will climb the long steep path to Warmiwañusca, or Dead Woman's Pass. At 4198 m (13769 ft) above sea level, this pass is the highest point of the trek. The second pass (Runkuracay) of the hike is at 3998 m(13113 ft), where on clear days, we enjoy superb views of



the snow-capped Cordillera Vilcabamba. The trail goes through some beautiful cloud forest on the gentle climb to the third pass, where you will walk through a causeway and a tunnel, both original Inca constructions. The highest point of the third pass is at 3700m (12136 ft). You'll be rewarded by devastatingly beautiful views of the Urubamba Valley below (on clear days). Soon you will reach the serene looking ruins of Phuyupatamarca, or the 'town above the clouds', at about 3650 m (11972 ft) above sea level. We camp for the final night close to Wiñay Wayna (Forever Young) ruins, a grandiose terraced hillside site, with panoramic views of the valley below and just a short hike from Choquequirao. Choquequirao is both the best and the least known of the Inca

ruins. It is not mentioned in any of the chronicles of the Spanish conquistadors and archaeologists today can do no more than speculate on its function. Choquequirao was a known ruin for centuries by the local Quechua farmers in the area. It was not until the American historian Hiram Bingham, in search of Vilcabamba, was led to the site by an 11 year old boy, on July 24, 1911, that the rest of the world became aware of its existence. At that time it was covered in thick vegetation. Bingham and his team returned in 1912 and 1915 to clear the growth. Over the years, a lot of work has been done on excavating and studying the site. Despite these efforts, many unanswered questions remain. You have the better part of the day to explore the site before returning by train to Cusco, for the night. Discover and try to solve some of the mystery of Choquequirao! The next leg of the tour takes us from the heights of Choquequirao and Cusco, to the Amazon lowlands of Puerto Maldonado. About half of Peru is located within the Amazon basin. However, due to its isolation, it is not generally available to the casual travelers. The Tambopata Candamo Reserved Zone is a 1.50 million hectare area in southeastern Amazonian Peru, created in 1990 by the national government working in partnership with local grassroots and international conservation organizations. The reserve protects the biological diversity of the entire watersheds of the Tavera and the Candamo Rivers and most of the watershed of the Tambopata River. The zone protects habitats ranging from the Andean highlands around the rivers' headwaters through some of the last remaining intact cloud forests to the lowland rainforests of the Amazon basin. Over 1,300 bird species (including 32 parrot species - 10% of the world's total), 200 mammal species, 90 frog species, 1,200 butterfly species, and 10,000 species of higher plants are protected within this reserve. One of the main towns is Puerto Maldonado which is serviced by air from Cusco. It is situated at the confluence of the Madre de Dios and Tambopata Rivers and is a bustling, booming tropical frontier town. Its principal activities are gold mining, Brazil nut collecting, timber extraction, agriculture and ecotourism. It is here that we fly, before we proceed by boat deeper into the jungle of the Tambopata Forest Reserve. The lodge we stay at is located on the Tambopata River, two hours by boat from Puerto Maldonado. There are plenty of nature trails around the lodge and you can spend as much time as you wish bird watching and exploring the jungle. Moreover, local naturalist guides are on hand to help identify and explain the flora and fauna of the area. Accommodation is in simple, comfortable bungalows, with private cold showers. Don't expect electricity. A Word on Sustainable Travel...We hope that one of the joys of traveling with Aurora Travel CO. will be in meeting the local people and traveling to more remote areas. Unfortunately, tourism can radically alter what it was that inspired the industry in the first place. It is for this reason that we as travelers have a responsibility to minimize our impact on the people and environments we enjoy.

Through our examples and attitudes we can ensure that our visits have minimal impact on the environment and that we foster positive cultural exchanges between ourselves and our local hosts. We thank you for your efforts in helping us act responsibly in our travels and hope that these guidelines assist you in having a wonderful trip!

Final Note

The information compiled and related to places and sightseeing in this dossier is provided in good faith. Due to the nature of travel, this information can and will change. The information supplied therefore must be taken as an indication only and not as a contractual obligation on the part of the company.