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8 Day Amazon Luxury – A Journey To The Source of Chocolate & Beyond



**CUSTOM ITINERARY – YOUR FLEXIBLE INCLUSIONS DATES –
8 DAY ITINERARY**

The Amazon Rainforest is the most biologically-rich haven on Earth

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Ecuador's rainforest is located in the heart of the world's largest and most famous tropical rainforest, the Amazon Basin. A short flight, or a descent by road down the flanks of the Andes, leads modern explorers and adventurers along the same routes the first Spanish Conquerors ventured through in their search of El Dorado or the land of Cinnamon... and found the mighty River Amazon instead.

Easily Accessible: Ecuador's portion of the Amazon is regarded as the most accessible of all the countries that share the Basin. Leaving Quito in the morning, you can be swinging in a hammock at your chosen lodge by lunchtime.

The country is also a continent-leader in nature- and community-based tourism initiatives, where the value of the forest and of its inhabitants' heritage has been recognized and prized above its short-term exploitation. By visiting the rainforest and staying at responsible lodges, you are actively contributing to its conservation for future generations – and of course, exploring one of the planet's most fascinating ecosystems.

Explorations and Discoveries: Our Ecuadorian Amazon itineraries offer environmentally-conscious programs for all ages, enjoyed in safety and comfort with reliable operators and experienced naturalist guides: explore the rain forest on treks on terra firma forest beneath the

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gigantic Amazon trees, along boardwalks crossing palm swamps and up observation towers for a close look at the forest canopy.

Take to native dugout canoes to paddle up rivers and creeks, or start early for birdwatching outings. Climb canopy towers or walkways for wonderful perspectives of the forests and its denizens... A new, green world awaits.

7 Day Itinerary: Ecuador: Quito, Guango – Archidona – Santa Rita – Misahualli - Amazon Rainforest,



Day 1 Arrival Ecuador: Quito

Upon arrival in Quito, you will be met by your private English-speaking Travel Specialist who will assist you with immigration and customs and escort you through the airport to the baggage claim area where you will meet your private English-speaking Driver. He will assist you with your luggage and then transfer you to your hotel.

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Upon arrival at the hotel, you will be welcomed by the concierge who will compliment you with a VIP check-in experience. Your luggage will be managed and delivered to your accommodation.



After check-in you will continue on with your driver and your professional local guide who has joined and is waiting for you in the lobby. While you wait for your accommodations to be available, you will enjoy a morning tour of Quito's old town and some of the main highlights of the city.

Lunch is on your own today – Your guide will recommend restaurants in the area you are touring .

After lunch, you will be returned to your hotel, where you will be at leisure for the remainder of the day.

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Dinner is on your own this evening. See Celebration Escapes' Restaurant Collection for recommendations for dining in Quito.

Day 2: Ecuador: Quito – Guango – Archidona – Santa Rita – Misahualli - Amazon Rainforest



Breakfast in the Hotel.

After breakfast, meet your private English-speaking driver in the lobby of your hotel for your tour.

Journey to the Source of Chocolate – A 2 Day Excursion

For this specially-designed itinerary, we have teamed up with the number one name in chocolate in Ecuador: award-winning Pacari Chocolate (www.pacarichocolate.com).

Guests will experience the finest chocolate while exploring a fascinating and biodiverse region in Ecuador – and all relatively close to the capital, Quito.

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The Ecuadorian Amazon was recently proved to be the birthplace of the cacao tree – not Central America! The itinerary includes birdwatching, a visit to working cacao farms, overnight at a magical rainforest lodge and a refreshing stop at an Andean thermal spring spa on the way back located between Cayambe Volcano and Antisana Volcano.



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Dinner is on your own this evening.

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Day 3: Ecuador: Quito – Guango – Archidona – Santa Rita – Misahualli - Amazon Rainforest

Breakfast in the Hotel.

After breakfast, check out of the hotel and meet your private English-speaking driver in the lobby of your hotel for your tour.

QUITO – GUANGO - ARCHIDONA – SANTA RITA – MISAHUALLÍ

We depart Quito on the main road east, climbing up to the pass at over 4,000 metres (13,000 ft) in the high Andes before beginning the descent into the 'green mansions' of the Amazon Rainforest.



Our first stop for a snack is the charming Guango Lodge, a haven for 15 species of hummingbird and many more beautiful creatures. Continuing southeast, we arrive at the small town of Archidona and the Santa Rita community, home of the Pacari Agro Tourism Project.

This project was developed by Pacari who not only purchase the community's cacao at fair trade prices but also provide technical assistance to improve yields, varieties and production. The visits by travellers also provide an additional welcome source of income for

these rural families.

We spend a pleasant and relaxing day with the community, learning how they harvest the fruit, produce the cacao and all the technical processes. As we explore the farms on foot, we come across petroglyphs, ancestral traces of the native cultures that inhabited this region for thousands of years, known as the Sacred Valley of the Anaconda.

After our hike, we are treated to lunch, served a regional specialty of river fish wrapped in a bijao palm leaf baked in a fire. This dish is accompanied by a tea made with the guayusa plant, a source of energy and good for hydrating.

After lunch, we take part in making chocolate paste, adding various local ingredients. Everyone gets to take some chocolate home with them, as well as drinking hot chocolate with the cacao harvested earlier in the day!

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We continue southwards to the jungle town of Misahuallí, where we will dine and overnight at the Hamadryade Lodge.

Dinner is on your own this evening at the Lodge.

Day 4: Ecuador: Amazon Rainforest

Breakfast in the Hotel.

After breakfast, check out of the lodge and meet your private English-speaking driver in the lobby of your hotel for your tour.

MISAHUALLÍ – PAPALLACTA – QUITO

We spend some time in the morning exploring the lodge, its forest and butterfly garden. This is beautiful high montane forest, with lots of birdlife to be spotted.



Returning northwards, we wind our way back to higher altitudes, arriving at the Termas de Papallacta Resort and Spa. This complex is regarded as the best in the country, and includes volcanic thermal pools, a hotel and spa. There, we can enjoy the beautiful natural springs, have a massage (extra cost) – there is even a chocolate massage available for the true chocaholics! – and a healthy lunch. In the afternoon, we drive back westwards to the city of Quito*.

Upon arrival in Quito, you will be delivered to your hotel where you will be welcomed for check-in. Your luggage will be managed and delivered to your accommodation.

The remainder of the day is at leisure

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Dinner is on your own tonight.

Overnight in Quito.

Notes

* This tour is easily combined with others: returning to the E-35 highway which runs north-south to the east of the city, it's easy to reach the airport at Tababela; Otavalo to the north; Cotopaxi to the south.

Maximum 15 guests.

Daily from Quito. From February to July the visit to the cacao farm is as described above. From August to January, cacao is not being harvested in the region, and we undertake other activities in the farm with the community.

The order of the visits may vary - depending on weather conditions and the day of the week. This tour includes walking at various altitudes

Day 5: Ecuador: Papallacta Resort and Spa - Amazon Rainforest - Coca La Selva jungle Lodge

Quito – Coca La Selva jungle Lodge

Breakfast in your hotel.

After breakfast, you will meet your private driver in the lobby of the hotel for your transfer to the airport. At the Quito International Airport you will be met by La Selva representative in the National departure area in order to assist you with the check-in process and give you a short briefing about the journey.

After a 30 minute commercial flight to Puerto Francisco de Orellana “El Coca”, our representative will transfer you by private transportation to the city's main dock. Our representative will take care of your luggage and will provide you with life vests and fresh water bottles.

An amazing fluvial journey of approximately two and a half hours in a motorized canoe will be the beginning of a great experience in the tropical rainforest. A delicious boxed lunch will be provided.

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At the end of the motorized canoe ride, you will be **dropped off at La Selva's main dock.**

After using the facilities and putting mosquito repellent on, a short **15 minute jungle walk** will lead you to a creek where a small canoe will be taken to enjoy an unforgettable **20 minutes paddle canoe ride** across “Garzacocho” (the heron’s lagoon) in order to reach the lodge area.

Do not forget that the only thing you must take care of is your carry-on and camera equipment. Your other luggage will be transported by our lodge’s staff.

Approximately 15 minutes later, the resident manager will greet you with a delicious welcome cocktail. From there you will continue on to relax in the bar area with a fresh tropical fruit snack and a short briefing with general information about the lodge and activities, provided by one of our bilingual naturalist guides.

16H30 – MATAPALO TRAIL: This trail was named after the Spanish name of the famous Strangler fig (Ficus sp) one of many remarkable trees that you will find during this short introductory walk, where your native and naturalist guides will start to share with you part of their knowledge about flora and fauna of the tropical rain forest.

18H40 – NIGHT WALK: A flashlight and a camera will be the most important tools you will need to enjoy all of the insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals that you might see during an hour walk in the darkness of the forest.

19H30 – DINNER

La Selva Lodge

To get a feeling of what La Selva is, just imagine a tranquil and comfortable place which is deep in a rainforest of unparalleled biodiversity.

La Selva Amazon Ecolodge has achieved several green certifications for our work with the environment, including recognition from the International Ecotourism Society, and Sustainable Tourism Certification from the Rainforest Alliance.

La Selva Lodge is located about two hours from Coca by motorized canoe, just outside the Yasuni National Park and within the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve.

The main lodge was built overlooking the glassy waters of Lake Garzacocho and it is our guests’ favorite spot. You can watch birds and other wildlife as you sip a cocktail from our fully stocked bar in comfort, or climb a few steps to look for wildlife from our observation tower.

When night falls, you will enjoy our fine cuisine in the restaurant, prepared by our chefs, as the birds and animals of the Amazon serenade you with their unique song.

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Accommodation:

The breezy, stylish cabanas are inspired by native bamboo designs, including some scenic suites with a view of Lake Garzacochoa and roomy family suites for those who have brought their children along on their jungle adventure. The Scenic and Superior Suites include exclusive rainforest showers, private balconies and great panoramic views, while the Family Suites include extra-spacious bathrooms, hammocks and a hot tub on a private porch.

The sounds of the rainforest soothe you to sleep at night, and the singing of birds awakens you in the morning.

At La Selva Lodge, we are deeply committed to sustainable ecotourism and keeping our impact on the environment to a minimum. Therefore, we do not have air conditioners in the rooms. There are, however, large windows and a ceiling fan which keeps the air in the suites circulating.

Activities:

At La Selva Lodge, something exciting is happening every day. Our trained, English-speaking guides will take you and your fellow travelers on a different tour, where you might see a boa constrictor, spot a parrot, catch a glimpse of a troop of monkeys passing overhead or even hook a piranha from the canoe!

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We cannot say what you'll do on any given day, because the guides decide what to do based on many factors like time of the day, season, weather, physical abilities of the group and where they think some exciting wildlife might be found. Your days will be filled with adventures like cultural activities in the community, jungle hikes, trips to the observation tower and wildlife canoe tours on the lagoon.

We also offer several extras activities like taking a kayak and explore the lagoon, fishing, swimming or just relaxing in the social areas.

Services:

La Selva is the only place in the area with a Spa. Here you have the opportunity to relax, unwind and enjoy the peaceful settings while our experienced massage therapist helps to release all tension from your body.

Our Butterfly Spa has been recognized by Fodor's Travel Magazine like one of the 15 best spas with a view in the world.

Also, we offer Yoga classes every afternoon. Feel at peace with your inner self and feel as one with the nature around you by joining to one of our classes.

At La Selva we provide 24 hours of electricity and we have internet service available in the social areas.

The lodge is 24 hours a day in contact with the office in Quito and we have an efficient contingency plan in case of emergency.

We also offer special activities for couples; we can organize a private dinner or a romantic cruise on the lagoon to share a unique moment with that special someone.

Day 6: Ecuador: Amazon Rainforest

06H30 – BREAKFAST

07H00 – CHAGUAMANGO TRAIL: This trail begins behind the lodge and finishes at the edge of the lake. During the walk your guides will talk about the neo-tropical pharmacy that we find in the rainforest. Many plants have been used by the indigenous groups of the Amazonia to cure different ailments, some of them will be spotted on the way. At the end of the walk, we will head back to the lodge by canoe. If you are lucky, you might see big troops of squirrel monkeys approaching the water, allowing you to take the best photos of wildlife.

12H30 – LUNCH

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16H30: CHARAPA TRAIL: This trail lasting one and a half hours, starts at the butterfly farm and ends on the edge of the lake. It's a wonderful loop that begins with a walk, returning to the lodge by canoe. Along the way we will try to sight different groups of mammals, monkeys and birds that in the afternoon hours get close to the lakeshore to look for food. Apart from a clear afternoon, you can also enjoy a beautiful sunset from the canoe.

18H40: NIGHT CANOE RIDE: With the help of a spotlight, your guides will take you in a paddle canoe around the lagoon looking for caimans, boas, bats, owls, night mammals and more nocturnal wildlife. If the sky is clear, we might have the chance to do some star gazing.

19H30 – DINNER

Day 7: Ecuador: Amazon Rainforest

06H00 – WAKE UP CALL

06H30 – BREAKFAST

07H00 – PARROT CLAY LICK: It is time to visit the most biologically diverse spot in the earth, the Yasuni National Park. A 20 minute canoe ride plus a 15 minute walk will head you back to the Napo River. A motorized canoe ride lasting 10 minutes will let you enjoy one of the most amazing displays of the wild world. Hundreds of parrots and parakeets will approach the treetops and later will come down to a clay bank to eat this soil rich in minerals. It is essential to have binoculars to enjoy it.

Once you identify the different species of parrots and parakeets, your naturalist guide will provide a lot of interesting information about this spectacular birds' behavior. The motorized canoe ride will continue for approximately 30 more minutes of birdwatching along the river banks.

It has been a wonderful morning, full of parrots, parakeets and other birds. Now it is time to enjoy a CULTURAL ACTIVITY. An Amazonian Kichwa family will receive you in their home. A visit to the garden "chacra" followed by a visit to the house is going to show you that part of the Amazonia that you do not find on the maps: the Amazon people. Motorized canoe ride, walk and a paddle canoe ride will lead you back to the lodge.

12H30: LUNCH

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16H00 – BUTTERFLY FARM: It is the moment to learn about the biology of this amazing insect. Our farm will show you the different stages of the butterfly complemented with important information provided by your naturalist guide. You will not want to leave the flying area without taking your best photos of our colorful butterflies.

Now that you have enchanting photos for your album, the adventure continues with **FISHING FOR PIRANHAS** in the Garzacochoa Lake. Fishing lines will be provided by your native guide, to let you catch your own piranha. Depending on the size of the fish, you will put it back in the water or if it is big enough you can give it to our gourmet chef and enjoy a tasty fish dinner. Keep in mind that the fish is much more delicious when you catch it yourself.

18H30 – LECTURE: A cup of coffee, a piece of paper and a pencil will help you to take note of important extra details provided by your naturalist guide in an interesting nature lecture.

19H30: DINNER

20H30: DEPARTURE BRIEFING: Your naturalist guide will provide all the necessary information for your departure to Coca and flight back to Quito.

Day 8: Ecuador: Amazon Rainforest - Quito

06H00 – WAKE UP CALL

06H30 – BREAKFAST

07H00 – DEPARTURE FOR COCA: In accordance with your last night briefing, you will have an early wake up call, breakfast and departure from the lodge.

The lodge staff will assist you with your checked luggage. Motorized canoe ride upstream to go back to Coca, where our representative will take you to the airport to help you with your checked luggage and boarding passes.

Arrive in Quito, or continue to your next destination.

Upon arrival at the airport you will meet your international flight to the US and forward to Home.

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If your flight is later in the day, we can craft additional elements for Quito while you await your departure time.

End of Services.

Ready to plan your journey? Contact us today ! 678-500-9548

Schedule Your Creative Planning Session Now!