

## AMAZON SAFARI 5D/4N PROGRAM

### Itinerary

#### Day 1: Quito

We will leave from Quito at 8:00 A.M. to travel to the Amazon watershed, with scenic and biodiverse cloud forests on our minds. In route, we will stop for a look at the majestic, high elevation and windswept paramos at the Cayambe Coca Ecological Reserve - a very tundra- like habitat. On clear days here, the views of the surroundings and various volcanoes are breathtaking; a stop right up at the continental divide



is one of the best spots from which to photograph the snowcapped volcano, Antisana, as it towers over the mountains below. Continuing our journey to the eastern Cloud Forest, we will wind our way amongst steep valleys – through the towns of Cuyuja and Baeza - where will see some gorgeous forested slopes and impressive waterfalls, born in Antisana Reserve, as they spill off of high cliffs. Our plan is to get to our lodge in time to get settled into our rooms, and even for a quick look around before lunch. Barring a quick restroom stop on the way, we'll make few stops in order to get there quickly because after lunch, we will have plenty to do!

This afternoon we will undertake a “walking safari” along the primary forest trails below the cabins. While at any moment a rare mammal could pop into view during the walk – they are wary - our safari is designed to run a trap-line of sorts, checking the motion-sensor cameras and the photos that they have taken over the last weeks, days, hours and even minutes. It is thrilling to see a photo of a puma, tapir, or perhaps an anteater – taken right where you are standing, perhaps even moments before! We'll plan to get back to the cabins for some relaxation time before dinner.

At dinner we will be officially welcomed with a taste of Ecuador's most well-known hot toddy, a delicious drink called “guayusa.” Made from water boiled with guayusa leaves, fruit juice and a dash of cane alcohol, it is sure to help warm us up. Adventurous eaters will be able to taste a local delicacy of guinea pig! After a magnificent dinner - our food is widely recognized for its originality and exquisite quality - a night hike awaits us, where we will search for owls, strange insects and nocturnal mammals.

Hotel night Cabañas San Isidro (superior room)

*Included: transport, English speaking guide, bedroom, lunch and dinner*

#### Day 2: Cosanga - Misahualli

For those interested, we'll put our birding caps first thing and get out for an early morning activity. While we slept, the lights around the lodge will have collected a mob of moths and

other insects, which means one thing: a buffet for insectivorous birds in search of breakfast! We will spend the early morning watching trogons, woodcreepers, flycatchers and tanagers, as they glean all sorts of bugs in a seemingly frantic attempt to satisfy their morning hunger. Soon after, we will venture down a nearby trail to watch the white-bellied antpitta as it comes to devour worms at the feeder. Have your cameras ready - but please turn off the flash so as to not startle it.



We then depart on our journey eastwards towards the Amazon. After a truly spectacular 1 hour drive down the slopes of the dramatic Andes mountains, past waterfalls and alongside rushing white capped rivers, we arrive at the small colonial town of Archidona. Located to the north of Tena, the capital of the Amazonian province of Napo, Archidona still serves as one of the region's main missionary outposts, as well as being a business and social center for the area's small Quichua communities.

Our "chocolate trail" begins here. In the community of Santa Rita, we will see the entire process of cocoa production. We will visit the plantations and working farms where the beans are taken from their brilliantly colored pods - the first stage of producing delicious Ecuadorian chocolate, acknowledged as amongst the best in the world. Visitors can even try their hand at roasting the beans. A delicious lunch will then be served in the host community at the house of a local family chosen by the Cocoa Cooperative.

We then drive to Misahualli for our overnight stay. Misahuallí is an attractive small town located on the banks of the impressive Napo River, one of the most important of the Ecuadorian Amazon. One of town's attractions is the small monkey population that can be seen most days in the local plaza and at the water's edge. The monkeys are funny and quite tame, but do watch out for your hat!

Night at Hamadryade Lodge (Suite Bungalow)

*Included: breakfast, transport, english speaking guide, excursion, lunch, bedroom and dinner*

### **Day 3: Misahualli**

Napo River and Wildlife and Rescue Center Exploration

After a nearly breakfast we will leave our lodge to visit Payka we Lake for birding and wildlife exploration. Don Pedro is a local visionary and is the lake's guardian. He guides guests on an hour-long paddle around the lake and shares stories of his life while he introduces his 'friends' – including exotic birds, spiders and wooly monkeys.

After a morning of wildlife exploration, we will travel down river on a motorized canoe (1 hour) from Misahualli to the tranquil Arajuno river - land of the Runa Huasi (people's home in Quichua) and Amazonico Animal Rehabilitation Center. The Center has been welcoming mistreated local animals since 1993. The Center cares for the animals, releasing them back into their hábitat when they are fully rehabilitated. Expect to see a wide variety of animals including caimans, macaws, tapirs, turtles, and more. After visiting the Center, we will finish the day with a hike through primary rain forest, followed by a float down the tranquil Arajuno River before heading back to Misahualli and the lodge.



Night at Hamadryade Lodge (Suite Bungalow)

*Included: breakfast, transport, english speaking guide, excursion, lunch, bedroom and dinner*

#### **Day 4: Misahualli - Papallacta**

##### **QuichuaNapo Runa Territory**

This ecotourism and cultural exchange experience takes visitors to Machacuyaku (which translates to "river of the Snake" in Quichua). The adventure begins with a two hour hike through primary and secondary rainforest. Along the way, your expert guide will reveal the secrets of the forest, pointing out its unique flora and fauna. On arrival at the Quichua community of Valle Hermoso, we will visit the community center and engage in several cultural experiences, including a blowgun contest and a pottery and handicraft workshop. Visitors can also simply relax on the shores of the Machacuyacu river. After a traditional meal, guests can choose to take a scenic hike with several look outs (miradores) with panoramic views of the Napo River Valley and its mysterious, unexplored caves, or opt for a short walk to a majestic ceiba tree, one of the forest's totems. There, we can learn more about the spiritual life and rituals of the Napo people, and how the community makes use of the many medicinal plants found in the forest.



We invite you to spend a day with us here and support this community effort to provide sustainable use for the rain forest and to promote self-determination among the local communities.

By midafternoon, it is time to head back to the Andes towards the Cayambe-Coca Reserve. It is a favourite with visitors attracted by its many fascinating features: the high latitude grasslands and hot springs, the wildlife and the area's multitude of pristine lakes.

We will arrive in Papallacta just in time for a relaxing and well-deserved natural spring thermal bath right outside your room!

Night at the Termas de Papallacta (Standard Room)

*Included: breakfast, transport, english speaking guide, excursion, lunch, bedroom and dinner*

### **Day 5: Papallacta - Quito**

Papallacta, located just outside the southern border of the park, is surrounded by some 60 lakes. It also has an abundance of hot springs (whose source is the Antisana volcano), that can be enjoyed after taking one of the many hikes into the Reserve to see waterfalls, birds and other local wildlife.



We have time this morning for a hike along the self-guided trails of the protected area, another nice relaxing bath, or a relaxing massage at Papallacta Spa before heading back to Quito or your flight back home.

*Included: breakfast, transport, english speaking guide, excursion, lunch*

### **Hotels**

#### **Cabañas San Isidro**

Cabañas San Isidro Cosanga, Baeza, Ecuador

Cabañas San Isidro's lodge and lush cloud forest reserve can be reached by paved road from Quito's new international airport in only about 2 hours, so getting here has gotten easy. San Isidro lies right between two large national parks, so 'getting lost' is part of the fun, and discovery is a daily event. Amazing cuisine, cooking classes, primary forest trails, mammal watching, birding, and archaeology are some of the activities waiting for you here!

#### **Hamadryade Lodge**

Hamadryade Lodge Tena, Ecuador

In Ecuador this is the perfect Amazon Lodge. At Hamadryade Lodge, we offer a wide range of activities; LAND activities from Jungle to Indigenous communities, and WATER activities from swimming in pristine waterfalls to rafting down incredible rivers. Whatever your age (even small kids) and condition, we have something beautiful and amazing that you can enjoy and discover.

### **Termas de Papallacta**

Termas de Papallacta Spa & Resort is located in the Andean highlands, in a unique natural environment, formed by a committed team that will ensure to our visitors, a complete relaxation and rest experience.

The 32 hotel rooms are made of preserved wood, with private bathroom and floor heating, 4 of these rooms have Jacuzzi and the others are standard. We have 6 cots available with no extra charge if needed.

The rooms are located around exclusive thermal water pools for guests in this area.

**INCLUDED:**

- Bilingual naturalist guide
- Private transportation
- Accommodation
- All meals

**NOT INCLUDED:**

- Alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks
- Personal Expenses
- Tips

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