

Reserva Amazonica: Puerto Maldonado, Peru

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Property

Tucked away in the heart of the jungle, these screened-in thatched-roof cabanas are filled with little luxuries befitting the exotic locale.

Location

Rainforest, baby! This is the real thing. A short plane ride from Lima drops you into Puerto Maldonado where a covered skiff waits for the 40-minute boat ride down the Madre de Dios river to the property.

Sleeps

Multiple cabana options, all with screened-in "siesta lounge"...kids will be begging for naptime in a hammock.

Highlights

Undiluted rain forest experience, get it while it's hot (sigh). Brilliant red and blue macaws flap overhead. Cayman scabble along the riverbanks (check them out on the "River by Night" boat tour). Riverside Cat's Claw massage was beyond relaxing. Meals cooked in traditional methods (bamboo-tube-over-fire and filled banana leaf) were incredible.

Good to know

Keep an eye out for a troop of Saddle-Back Tamarinds, the most adorable of black and tan monkeys the size of your palm. We saw a group of 15-20 frolicking above the nature center. Kids will get more out of the Amazon Rainforest experience by catching the nightly movie about local wildlife. Many of the guides are dads, proud locals of the region, and they live to answer those four millions "why" and "how" questions that can drive us batty...oh! There are bats, too! Meals and excursions included.

Contact

<http://www.inkaterra.com/en/reserva-amazonica>

Welcome to the Jungle

by [Sascha Zuger](#)

Luxury and an authentic remote Amazonian rainforest experience in one locale? We had to pack up and head to Peru to check it out.



We touched down into the sleepy fishing village of Puerto Maldonado after enjoying an eagle eye view glimpse of the wild expanse we'd call home for the next few days. A chocolatey river snaked through endless deep green for miles...this was hardcore nature time and our crew couldn't wait!



Cruising through the town's dusty roads, bordered by pastel bodegas and thatch roofed homes, the little eyes onboard our air conditioned bus widened at the site of wilds herds of "motos." Yes, motorcycling is the transpo of choice, and a family affair, so prepare the kids to see families of three and four (including babies!) vrooming down the dirt roads. Even the cabs are merely covered benches attached to the back of the bikes and supported by large wheels. It ain't Epcot.

We boarded the boat and marveled at passing canoes powered with makeshift motors loaded four to five feet high in green bunches of bananas. Our guide handed out chilled towels scented with citrus and we realized luxury and reality could mix. The guide described the catfish and gold mining industries as we passed locals dipping in hand lines to catch the up-to-80 pound fish.

We pulled up to the hand painted Reserva Amazonica sign and we were welcomed along a walkway created by smoothed slabs of giant rainforest tree trunks to a beautiful ecolodge for fruity juice refreshers. I was totally jealous of the killer Little Explorer fanny pack (compass, jungle hat, field giude, etc.) handed out to the little ones. Create lifelong environmentalists simply by sharing the amazing world around them.

The offered excursions boggled: canoeing Lake Sandoval with endangered giant river otters, visiting a local village to check out their subsistence farming methods, touring a butterfly house filled with giant Blue Morphos and dozens of other striking flutterbyes...in the end, we settled on a trip through an Amazon Concepcion Botanical Garden (complete with sampling of local medicinal plants and foods– that Dragon's Blood is great for skeeter bites!– and a chance to flashback to summer camp and get our archery on with hand carved bows and arrows), a lofty hike among the rainforest treetops on the Canopy Tour (think great birding from hanging bridges 90 feet up–no worries, the National Geographic Society has given their seal of approval on this one) and naturally an Anaconda Walk and Cayman Night Cruise (cause we're just those kind of people).

Yuri, our guide, was incredibly insightful and used his history of 30 years in the region to explain the nature and culture in a way that helped us really connect and feel we were a part of the place. Endlessly patient, his dad-of-three-ness came through in the simple but thorough explanations of what we were seeing and experiencing.

Hikes through the surrounding forest kept us grounded in between fabulous gourmet meals and two hour Amazon purification massages. Our individual cabana was romantically authentic, and luxe local amenities (Peruvian cotton robes, comfy Andean sandals recycled from tires, rattan fans woven by village women, even the Heliotrope Rinse and Botanical Citronella Splash include precious natural elements from the wilderness inches from your villa door) tucked here and there were endless signs of attention to detail. It was simply an amazing Amazonian adventure and I was as crushed as an anaconda's dinner when it was time to go.

Profiled by [Sascha Zuger](#)