



CUYABENO WILDLIFE RESERVE

Location:

Lower and middle elevations of the Cuyabeno reserve.
(Kichwa y Secoya Territory)

Lagartococha Tour 7 Days / 6 Nights

2 Participant minimum

ITINERARY

DAY 1.-

We'll begin our adventure at 9:30am in Hotel D' Mario's restaurant located in the city of Lago Agrio. (For those who are arriving by bus, you need to take a yellow taxi from the bus terminal to Hotel D' Mario. It's a well-known hotel readily recognizable by any taxi driver.) For those arriving by air, you will start at 10:30am after our transportation operator welcomes you at the airport.

We will travel by private bus for about two hours until we reach the small village and canoe pickup point "Tierras Orientales" located on the shores of the Aguarico River. Here we will have a boxed lunch and we'll prepare to take the motorized canoe and start the second part of our journey. We'll follow the river for about 3 hours to "La Bocana" – a place where the Aguarico River and the Cuyabeno River meet. The views will captivate our attention where we'll not only have the chance to meet the playful pink river dolphins for the first time but also partake in observing and understanding the nuances between the primary and secondary forests; a commentary our knowledgeable guide will provide for us.

We'll continue our trip for about 20 minutes up the Cuyabeno River until we reach our Amazon Lodge nestled on the shores of the "Laguna San Francisco" within the Cuyabeno reserve. En route, this leg of our adventure will expose us to a breathtaking showcase of biodiversity. We'll experience the sights and sounds of the jungle; comprised of a rich tapestry of flora and fauna. Monkeys, birds, reptiles, and aquatic mammals will unveil themselves from behind the thick walls of vegetation and from beneath the river currents. Notably, many of these fascinating creatures can be readily seen without the assistance of binoculars. However, if you possess a pair, it's encouraged to bring them along. Alternatively, we will happily provide binoculars to enhance your viewing experience.

Finally, we will arrive at our lodge, and we will have time to relax and familiarize ourselves with the lodging and amenities on the property.

As evening falls and dinner concludes, our guide will present an overview of the upcoming activities spanning the next few days. Following this briefing, an invitation will be extended to partake in a night walk.

Under the cloak of night, we will embark on a guided expedition along the trails encircling the lodge. This quick jaunt will unveil intriguing nocturnal animals, including insects, spiders, amphibians, and arboreal snakes among other unique species. This experience promises to provide a deeper understanding of the vibrant ecosystem that awakens after sunset.



DAY 2.-

Just before dawn, we'll participate in an early morning activity alongside our guide, enabling us to revel in the untouched magnificence of the rainforest and its inhabitants in their most pristine and undisturbed state.

At 5:30am we'll start our excursion of the Cuyabeno river in our motorized canoe for about 1.5 hours. This is the best time to see a wide variety of birds and other animals until we arrive to the "Saladero" – a clay lick full of nutrients which is exposed due to the consistent lapping of the river exposing the mudbank. Here, an awe-inspiring spectacle awaits, as five distinct species of vividly colored parrots and parakeets gather to nibble on the mineral-rich clay that helps purify their bodies from toxins. After this amazing morning, we'll return to the lodge where a delectable breakfast awaits us. A well-deserved respite follows, allowing us to recharge for the day ahead.

After we've rested, our local guide will extend an invitation to join in a brief yet enriching walk. During this exploration, our guide will impart the ancestral wisdom that has been faithfully passed down through generations. Delving into the practical applications of the medicinal plants that litter the forest, this experience promises to be both enlightening and immersive. With a newfound appreciation for the forest plants, we will make our way back to the lodge, where a delectable lunch awaits.

As the afternoon sun wanes and the heat of the day passes, our adventure resumes at 4:00pm. A short canoe ride will bring us to Birding Observational Tower, ingeniously constructed around one of the region's largest Kapok trees, soaring to an impressive height of 28 meters (65 feet). Here, an awe-inspiring panorama of the forest canopy unfolds, presenting an ideal vantage point to observe and listen to the symphony of diverse animals found within the forest.

Once we've descended, the day's adventure will end at the base of the tower. We'll have a short night walk around the tower promising new species of insects to be found. Once we're done, we'll return to the lodge where a freshly prepared dinner will be awaiting our arrival.

DAY 3.-

The best time to enjoy the wonders of the lush rainforest and appreciate the wildlife is just before dawn. Our activity will start at 6:00am and we will take a paddle canoe to fully immerse ourselves in the incredible expansiveness of the jungle. Navigating the serene waters of the nearby lagoons provides an intimate vantage point to appreciate and witness the myriad of bird and mammal species that call this ecosystem theirs. We'll retrace our path back to the lodge where a scrumptious breakfast awaits.

After having taken a short rest, we'll prepare our luggage following the guide's instructions to embark on our camping adventure. We'll take our motor canoe and navigate down the Cuyabeno River looking for animals in the forest until we reach the "Bocana" where we'll look for the pink river dolphins one more time and take in the marvelous view. Here we'll have a spectacular experience surrounded by the colorful waters of the white Aguarico River filled with sediments from the mountains and the Cuyabeno river, black with tannins from the decomposition of trees deep in the Amazon.



We'll navigate on the Aguarico river for about 2 hours until we reach our disembarking point "Iripari". Here, we'll share a boxed lunch and after we'll continue with a short walk via a trail that reaches one of the biggest freshwater lagoons in the Amazon called "Zancudococha." After we have enjoyed our time at the lagoon and the landscape at sunset, we can take a refreshing dip in the cool waters to later go to our camping site to have a delicious dinner.

Before resting for the evening, our guide will share the activities for the following day and will give us an informational presentation explaining the area in which we'll be visiting.

DAY 4.-

Our day will start at 6:00am as we take our motor canoe to slowly follow the fringes of the lagoon to leisurely explore the tapestry of trees and rich biodiversity in this floating forest ecosystem known as "Moretal". This unique ecosystem, one of the five encompassing this part of the Amazon rainforest, is characterized by the presence of the majestic palm trees, "Morete Palm."

We'll return to our lodge to indulge in a filling breakfast and take a brief break. After, we'll be sure to listen to our guide's instructions and prepare our luggage for the next leg of our adventure. Once again, we'll board our trusty motor canoe to meander 45 minutes up the river to "Iripari" where we'll admire the dimensionality of the forest as we canoe through two distinct parts: the floating forest (the narrow part of the river) and dryer, sprawling expanses of the hard earth rainforest (the wide part of the river). Eventually, we'll transition to the Aguarico River and trace its course towards the border between Ecuador and Peru.

Here, a spectacle of nature unfolds before us: an expansive stretch of the floating forest and a breathtaking variety of flora and fauna. Our navigation will then take us upstream to "Lagartococha," a journey spanning approximately two hours. We'll be on the lookout for the presence of monkeys, the playful dance of pink river dolphins, and the melodious diversity of avian inhabitants. We'll even have the extraordinary opportunity to swim alongside the dolphins, a truly unique experience.

After a delicious lunch and a beautiful view, our adventure marches on until we reach "Redondococha" where we'll camp for the next two nights. Here, we'll be immersed among innumerable trees flooded by the black waters and neighbor the Igapó Lake which is the largest in the Amazon. Housing five distinct ecosystems, this area is dappled with wide-sweeping Macrolobium trees, renowned for their remarkable growth sustained by nutrient-rich bark. These trees become havens for microscopic creatures, epiphytic plants, and a multitude of bird species.

We'll then help the crew set up our camp in the primary forest listening to their expertise and guidance. After the sun dips below the horizon, we'll have delicious dinner within the heart of the forest. Our guide will give an informational talk about the plans for the following day, after which they'll invite us to explore our new surroundings and experience the forest in its pristine and undiluted form.



DAY 5.-

Once more we'll prepare ourselves to go in search of new adventures with us discovering new birds and animals to add to our ever-growing checklist.

We'll embark on another canoe excursion navigating through a series of small lagoons which will lead us to Delfincocha Lake. Aptly named for its thriving population of pink dolphins, we'll have the opportunity to not only observe these beautiful creatures, but also to swim with them; an experience that is nothing short of extraordinary.

Later, we'll return to our campsite and feast upon an exquisite jungle breakfast. Following a short break, our guide will invite us to join them on a short walk in the "Terra Firme" forest. Here, we'll have the privilege of meeting an indigenous group belonging to the ancestral "Secoya" people, opening a window into their cultural heritage.

In the afternoon, after our boxed lunch, we'll again hop into our motor canoe to explore the small meandering outlets, serpentine waterways, and enigmatic black water lagoons which comprise the tapestry of this unique ecosystem. Our eyes will feast upon a marvelous view of the landscape before we indulge in a refreshing plunge in the lagoon's cool waters.

As evening approaches, we'll adventure to find caimans, distant relatives of crocodiles, resting just under the water's surface and hidden among snarled tree roots. Of course, along the way we'll encounter species of nocturnal animals like fishing bats, arboreal boas, and nocturnal birds.

To cap off our busy day, we'll return to camp where a delicious dinner will be waiting for us. We'll again be invited to join our guide for a night walk in which we try to find a myriad of insects in the forest's nightly embrace.

DAY 6.-

At 6:00am, our guide will extend an invitation to participate in an early morning activity to engage with nature. Upon its conclusions, a hearty breakfast awaits us once we return to our campsite.

Following breakfast, we'll prepare our equipment and return to the Amazon lodge, leaving our campsite behind. Along the way, we'll have the privilege of visiting diverse Amazon communities giving us a glimpse into their culture and daily lives. This opportunity also extends to supporting local economies as we admire the remarkable craftsmanship of local artisans who create masterpieces from materials sourced within the forest, they call home. After a boxed lunch, we'll take a dip in the inviting waters of the Aguarico river as we visit its shores before returning to our lodge.

After our day closes, we'll finally arrive at our lodge. The comfort of our rooms, soft beds, and refreshing showers awaits us. After we're rested and all cleaned up, we'll feast upon a delicious homecooked meal for dinner.

Our guide will then assist us with our checklists. We'll revisit the incredible animals we've encountered throughout this grand adventure, discovering new insights into these remarkable creatures and the forest they live in. Our guide will be ready to address any questions that arise, fostering a deeper understanding of the captivating world we've had the privilege to explore.



DAY 7.-

As we approach the end of our adventure together, our final day will open with a short activity either canoeing on the tranquil waters in search of elusive wildlife or exploring the forest on foot.

After our final breakfast, we'll have to prepare our luggage for the return trip. Our voyage homeward starts with a 30-minute canoe ride down the Cuyabeno river until we meet the Aguarico River and travel three hours upstream, tracing the path that leads us back to "Tierras Orientales." Here, our private transport will meet us to take us to the city of Lago Agrio. We'll arrive around 4:00pm to either return to Quito by bus or plane.

OUR SERVICES

What´s included?

- River transport (canoe)
- Naturalist bilingual guide, trained in biology and ecotourism speaks English and Spanish
- Accommodation in traditional cabins. Comfortable rooms with private bathroom (twin doubles, matrimonial)
- Three nutritious meals a day (including purified bottled water and an assortment of hot drinks)
- Breakfast is served at 8:30 a.m.
- Lunch is served at 1:30 p.m.
- Dinner is served at 7:00 p.m.
- Tea, coffee, chocolate enabled all day.
- Catering for vegetarians or vegans
- We have electricity to charge batteries at night (from 6h00am to 10h00pm)
- Equipment for the outdoors
- Water poncho • Rubber boots • Binoculars for a better view of flora and fauna
- From 6:30p.m. to 9:00p.m. "happy time" you can enjoy free caipirinha in our bar
- Biodegradable soap and shampoo

What´s not included?

- Transportation Quito Lago Agrio Quito by private transport, bus, or plane
- Additional drinks such as beer and wine inside and outside the Lodge
- Visit observation tower 6 dollars per Passenger.
- First day breakfast • Last day dinner
- Tips for our crew and guides
- Our recommended tipping guidelines are as follows 20 dollars each day for the guides and the staff.
- Souvenirs made by our community artisans.



What should I bring?

- Original Passport or a color copy
- Cash for tips and souvenirs
- Lightweight quick-drying short-sleeved shirts
- Quick-drying Long-sleeved shirts
- Quick-drying material long pants
- Comfortable sandals or shoes (flipflops not recommended)
- Swimsuit and personal towel
- Hat or Cap with strap
- Sunglasses with UV protection
- Backpack with water protection
- Insect repellent with citronella preference
- Sunblock
- Water bottle for your personal use
- Hand-head flashlight with separate batteries or recommended rechargeable flashlight of 500 lumens led light.
- Binoculars (10x42) if you can. These are recommended for the best viewing of the various animals we're likely to encounter in the reserve.
- A field notebook to keep track of all the amazing things you've seen and learned.
- Small knife may be useful in some cases.
- Reading material for your free time

THE AMAZON AND TROPICAL INSECT VECTORED DISEASES

When you are traveling in Ecuador do not forget to bring your original passport or a color copy.

This area of the Amazon has a very low infection rate from these tropical diseases including Yellow Fever, Malaria, Leishmaniasis, or Chagas Disease. Before organizing your trip, we ALWAYS recommend visiting your doctor to obtain the most appropriate information about the tropical diseases and their recommendations for the appropriate medications.

We recommend the use of our provided mosquito net while sleeping or resting in your bed, so you are protected from mosquitoes and other biting insects during your rest.

Other biting insects and arthropods such as chiggers (a mite) and ticks may be present within the reserve. These do not carry infectious diseases but can be very annoying. We recommend using insect repellent and long sleeves while out on hikes. Upon return to your room, do not sit on your bed and immediately take a shower and change your clothes and hang them up to mitigate the risk of biting arthropods remaining on or in your clothes.

OUR SEASONS

The Cuyabeno reserve in the Amazon has a dry season marked from November to February and the rainiest season runs from May to July. The temperature in the Amazon rainforest for most of the year ranges from 18 to 25°C (64-77°F) during the day and at night temperatures can drop to 15°C (60°F).

GROUP SIZE

For our activities it is very important to work with small groups. We maximize our groups to 10 passengers per guide to guarantee our visitors a unique and personal experience in the jungle with all its splendor. This also helps us reduce impact that directly or indirectly affects the unique ecosystems we visit.

If you wish for a private guide for a smaller group, feel free to contact us as we can provide you with a private, naturalist bilingual guide for an additional cost.