

“Awesome amazon experience”

Reviewed January 29, 2015

Easily the best experience I've had in South America so far. Putting a freshly caught alligator on the barbecue whilst camping in the amazon was as much jungle as I could possibly hope for. Wilder was an amazing guide; very knowledgeable and he did everything he could do to please us. Oh, and the fact that he can catch literally any animal out there with his bare hands is kinda cool as well.

Furthermore, I really liked the fact that this tour is not that touristy. We were only with 5 people in total so we had a lot of freedom in planning the trip exactly how we wanted it. The lodge was really nice as well; clean rooms and nets against the mosquitos. And even the food was really nice too. All in all a great, great experience. Thanks guys!

“Surpassed our Expectations”

Reviewed January 16, 2015

Wilder is the full package! He is enthusiastic and eager to show you his native home. He is very knowledgeable and he uses all senses to find the object that he wants to show you. We were thoroughly challenged with different tours daily. Wildlife is abundant and we were spoiled with being the only ones around. Do not come if you cannot cope with swarms of mosquito and other creepy crawlies. Do not come if rustic is not your thing. But, make sure you come with an open mind and all cover up everywhere else. Many of the details of the trip have already been described by other reviewers, and some of the best tours are ones we did not expect; therefore, I will save the element of surprise for future travelers. So, arrive physically ready for all tours and the trip will surpass your expectations. It's easier to just show up and let Wilder do the planning for you.

Food tip: the fish from the river/lake we caught was the best food we had the entire trip.

Bob was very helpful with organizing and booking our entire trip to Peru; this portion being the first of three parts. This first part is the most outstanding of the entire trip. **Room**

Tip: views from every room.

“Peruvian Amazon Without Tourists — The Real Experience”

Reviewed October 26, 2014

If you are looking for a true and non-tourist experience in Peru's Amazon region, this is it! The Amazon Refuge Lodge is located at the end of human habitation on the Yanayacu River. The trip from Iquitos to the port at Nauta will require 1+ hrs by road and then another 5 hrs to the Lodge by river. Your reward at the end of journey will be howler monkeys serenade in the morning and visits by hawks, egrets, snakes and other critters right at your doorstep. Our guides Juan Carlos and Wilder were absolutely exceptional and adjusted each day's events to the desires of the group. I was fortunate enough to be an ad hoc member of MelissaDaveSeattle's group. This was a spirited and bold two-couple group that were ready for any adventure. Be warned, you will be wet, dirty and tired but the rewards are amazing. The highlight for me were the night walks in the jungle. The Lodge staff will do their very best to meet your needs, but you need to remember that that you are 62km down-river from the nearest significant resupply point. I would highly recommend you carry your gear in water-proof packs and have snack food, sturdy water containers and multiple sock changes as you will spend a significant time in knee-high rubber boots. This was among the very best experiences of my life.

“Best Jungle Stay Anywhere In The World”

Reviewed October 11, 2014

Wow. Just Wow. We didn't know what to expect on this trip. But the wildlife watching exceeded even our wildest expectations. If you want to see wildlife in the Amazon jungle, the Amazon Lodge is the way to do it. Our guides, Juan Carlos and Wilder were amazing. They managed to capture a 6 foot caiman and a big sloth using nothing but their bare hands. Their knowledge of the plants and animals was extensive. We always felt safe with them – even in the jungle at night. They both had a delightful sense of humor and kept us laughing even when our boots were covered in mud. The entire staff from the cook to the boat driver were friendly and warm – we came to love them all. There was a great balance of time to hike and see wildlife as well as time to relax and reflect. Here was what we ended up doing – though it's clear that the guides customize the plans each day depending on how the group was feeling and what we wanted to see:

- Day 1: Feeding at the turtle sanctuary, trip up the Amazon River to the lodge, night jungle walk where we saw frogs, lizards, and tarantulas

- Day 2: Bird watching canoe trip, medicinal jungle plant hike, caiman capture, Piranha fishing, Sloth capture
- Day 3: Electric Eel capture, Amazon River swimming, dolphin observation, jungle rum tasting & local village visit, Boa Constrictor capture
- Day 4: Baby caiman capture, jungle hike to Lake Yarinah with optional overnight camping where we saw
- Day 5: Canoe wildlife watching trip, visit to local village
- Day 6: Trip back up river, dolphin observation

In the end we saw more wildlife than we imagined possible in 6 days:

- Rare Sightings: Jabiru Red Throated Stork, Hoatzin Bird, Owl Monkeys (Night Monkey), Pigmy Marmoset, Pink Dolphins
- Birds: Horn Screamer, Black Collar Hawks, Slate Collar Hawk, Great Black Hawk, Roadside Hawk, Yellow Headed Cara Cara, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Striated Herron, Cocoli Herron, Rufecens Tiger Herron, Chestnut Eared Tucans, Great Kikesde Fly Catchers, Common Lesser Kikede Fly Catchers, Tropical King Bird, Forked Tail Fly Catchers, Bluish Fronted Jacamar, White Eared Jacamar, Brown Chested Martin, White Wing Swallow, Rough Wing Swallow, Bank Swallow, Forked Tail Palm Swift, Amazon Green King Fishers, Green King Fisher, White Ring King Fisher, Turkey Vultures, Black Vultures, Silver Beaked Tanagers, Anteater Birds, Wattled Jacana, Dusky Throated Antshrike, Blue & Yellow Macaw, Meally Parrots, Orange Winged Parrots, Shorted Tailed Parrots, White Winged Parakeet, Cobalt Winged Parakeet, White Eyed Parakeet, Cormorant
- Fish: Red Bellied Piranha, White Piranha, Fruit Eating Piranha (Colosoma), Paiche fish, Armored Cat Fish, Wolf Fish, Croaker Fish, Monkey Fish, Electric Eel
- Reptiles: Spectacle Caiman, Amazon Tree Boa (Cat Eyed Boa), Red Wiper Snake, Fleur De Lance (Bothrox), Dragon Lizard, tons of tree frogs, Clown Tree Frog, Owl Frog, French Lip Frog, Skink Lizard
- Creepy Crawlies: Pink Toed Tarantula, Wolf Spiders, Lysidae Spiders, Black Scorpion, Millipedes, Centipede
- Monkeys: Howler Monkeys, Squirrel Monkeys, Wolley Monkeys, Brown and White Capuchin Monkeys

- Other Mammals: Possum, Brown Throated Three Toed Sloth, Yellow Crowned Brush Tailed Rat, Amazon Red Squirrel, Grey River Dolphins

Be sure to pack your electronics and cameras in dry bags. The trip up river can be damp. So best to protect everything!

We have been on numerous jungle hikes and excursions previously, but Amazon Lodge was by far the best! If you are looking to immerse yourself in the jungle in a rustic but intimate setting – this is the place.

“Perfect stay in Amazon”

Reviewed July 30, 2014

If you are not a package tour type of tourist, this is your best bet for Amazon experience, its not so crowded and you are sure to get a personal experience of the rainforest. To me, our guide Wilder was an unbelievable person with a strong passion for his work. He had even caught a living anaconda just by hands in the river to show it to us. If you dont need the aircon and wifi and dont mind some mosquitos, you should try this one. Stayed July 2014, traveled with friends

“A-MAZING!”

Reviewed July 29, 2014

A truly great experience. The Amazon Refuge is beautiful, the last inhabited place on the YanaYacu River, no-one passes, and you feel that it's just you, the jungle, and the creatures that live there. The noises of the place are incredible, the river literally jumps with fish, and the bird life is stupendous. In spite of all this activity, the camp made me feel peaceful, grounded, and rested. A place to realise how beautiful and bountiful the earth is.

The lodge is well designed. The cabins (5 of them) line one side of a small river. On the other side is the dining/communal area. These areas are connected by a wooden walkway, with an open viewing platform in the middle for star-gazing, bird-watching etc. The cabins are basic, but comfortable – spacious, fully covered with mosquito screens and mosquito nets

over the beds. The bathroom is tiled, with a cold water shower, and flushing toilet. Toilet paper is provided. Sheets and towels are also provided. Each cabin has a balcony with table and chairs, and a hammock. There is electricity – a generator is turned on every evening, so batteries can be re-charged. Although you can see your neighbours on their balcony, cabins are well spaced, and you feel as if you have privacy. When we were there, there was only one other family (3 persons). Part of the charm of this place is that it's small – even if it were full there would only be about 20 guests.

All of the staff are amazing. Our guide was Wilder, part boy-scout, part energiser bunny, part Crocodile Dundee. He had a fantastic eye for spotting wildlife, and once he'd seen it, he was often able to get hold of it – whether this involved shinnying 60 feet up a tree to bring down a sloth so we could have a close look at it, jumping into the river to fish out a (large) anaconda, or grabbing a (baby) caiman. He was always laughing, and his favourite saying was 'anything is possible'. Blumer was also a great guide, and serenaded us one morning at breakfast with a rendition of 'O Sole Mio'!! – and traditional folk music, via John Denver. One morning after a magical boat ride, he also prepared us one of his special drinks – a tropical concoction with rum – which I enjoyed while swinging in the hammock! Gloria cooked us great food in very large portions. The fact that we were vegetarians didn't faze her at all. Tea, coffee and filtered water are available all day long. Somehow this place just gels, and even the staff who couldn't speak English, seemed dedicating to caring for us and giving us a good time.

Activities were plentiful, and consisted of walks and canoe rides (both day and night). It's also possible to hike to a more remote area and camp out. We also visited Wilder's village. For us, the magic of this place was just to be in the jungle, – to feel it, to see the stars and the fire-flies; to hear it. We didn't expect to see animals but were pleasantly surprised – we saw an ocelot, about 5 types of monkeys – (including squirrel and capuchin monkeys from the lodge itself), a sloth, two types of anaconda and a large tree boa, and of course various bugs and frogs.

Can't recommend this place and all the people concerned with it (we also met Bob, one of the owners, and Juan Carlos) enough. It's also very reasonably priced.

Tip: Take lots of repellent – there are lots of mosquitos. (No malaria though). You will get bitten. Take a long-sleeved, long shirt (long enough to cover the top of your trousers) and long trousers. A change of clothes might also be good – once we got wet, and clothes don't dry, it's too humid. The lodge provides wellington boots for jungle walks. If you have binoculars take them to get a good look at all the glorious birds – Wilder had a pair, which he passed around often, but the more you have, the more you see! **Room Tip:** All of the cabins have a river view. No difference between them.

“A unique experience for even seasoned Amazon travelers”

Reviewed July 19, 2014

I have been to the Amazon a few times, working with scientists. I returned this time as a tourist, and was very careful on which tour I booked because I wanted one that was deep into the region, small and very “un”touristy feeling. Regular tours with too many people in a boat, in too heavily populated areas are very common.

This experience was excellent.

The owner of the refuge center even met us at the 5 a.m. pick-up, along with our guide, Wilder, who has lived more than 30 years in the YanaYacu settlement beside the reserve, where we would spend 4 days and three nights.

We were four; the refuge center was ours for the duration, which was exactly what I wanted – less people, more forest, but the set-up was good enough that even with a full house (I think 20?) you could still feel like you were in the wilderness.

My bungalow was ON the YanaYacu creek/river, and I woke up and went to sleep listening to nothing but the calls of cara cara and other birds and howler monkeys on all sides.

Our guide, Wilder, was excellent, and truly knew the forest like the back of his hand. you cannot underplay the value of a native guide ... experience and practicality and i still marvel at how he managed to spot sloths as specks in trees as we paddled by in the dugout.

He took us on a hike one day and showed us how to get water from a vine, what sort of fruits and plants and grubs (coconut worm!) we could eat, and was a master at spotting wildlife and

also great at providing an authentic experience.

One night, looking for cayman, he fell off the dugout canoe as he was reaching for one and emerged to our surprise, soaking wet and dragging himself on board with a five-foot cayman.

Now that is impressive!

He was attentive, an expert, a genuinely nice and interesting fellow and going to his Cocama village felt like a privilege not a tourist experience.

Four days was not enough.

In a world (read as Iquitos) of burgeoning tourism commerce and a whole lot of companies with so-so guides and difficulty deciding which is a good experience and what is crap, this place stands out.

I have lived in the Brazilian Amazon and spent a lot of time in Loreto and the Yavari-Mirin rivers, so I know what a good location is, what sort of animal spotting could be expected and what areas are good, and this was great.