

Cruising the Peruvian Amazon

If seeing the Amazon is one of those top 10 experiences of your life then International Experiences makes sure you have a memorable time. I had the privilege to travel with International Expeditions July 2018; we had a few days of epic Amazonian rain and I was beyond content. From the time you arrive you get treated to delectable meals and tour through Iquitos just before you embark. Going aboard your floating home for the week is like you'd been there all along because everyone has already learned your name. Your room's view is the lush Amazon with floor to ceiling windows so you never think twice about not having a TV. Experiencing the Amazon begins from day one when you get to go out on the river and getting out there doesn't mean you're exploring on your own. Each zodiac is equipped with refreshing drinks, cold towels and two amazing naturalists to help you spot the wildlife. It really takes that experienced eye and ear to find you the animals you went there to see with your own eyes.

Being on this adventure treats you to seeing animals in their natural habitat. I got to see every animal that was on my list to see in the Amazon. In case I haven't already said it, I have wanted to go to the Amazon since I was a child. I grew up reading National Geographic magazines. So what were the animals I got to check off my list you ask? Poison dart frog, bird eating spider (only saw a baby and it was already too big for my agoraphobic ways), baby anaconda which we saw through a jungle walk with a man who knew the jungle like the back of his hand and knew exactly where to find these animals without disturbing them much. A caiman and capybara which we saw during a night excursion. Piranhas which we saw while fishing for them. You'll be happy to know piranhas aren't as dangerous as most people actually think they are. Sure, they have extremely sharp teeth but they only go after raw meat so unless you've just injured yourself, you are safe swimming with them - which by the way I got to do! We also got to see pink dolphins, yes they are pink and you have to see them for yourself. I even saw animals I never even knew existed! For example this red snake that can swim and this bird called the *pato* (the only bird name worth remembering haha) - it was a blast trying to find this bird until your eyes hurt but so worth it once you see it. Not so fun was seeing that snake swim across the river.

On top of the amazing wildlife adventures, International Adventures has established relationships with local communities giving guests the opportunity to visit Amazonian villages. You are welcomed into their homes, get to see how Amazonian beer is made (something I will not spoil for you, feel free to email me to find out) and you visit the school and meet with the kids. Be sure you let your clients know about bringing cash along so they don't miss out on souvenirs because once you leave Iquitos there are no more ATMs for a week and your visits to the villages are a treat of handcrafts you won't find in a store.

If I haven't made it clear, I had an amazing time on this trip and any of your clients who have been talking about seeing the Amazon would be remiss if they put it off for much longer. Being on this trip you get to see wildlife in their natural habitat, taste Peruvian cuisine while gliding along the Amazon river and share all these things with people who have a fervent love for their home and jobs. Traveling with International Expeditions means traveling with friends you never knew you had.