

REFUGIO AMAZONAS LODGE FACT SHEET & ACTIVITIES

REFUGIO AMAZONAS – CONCEPT, LOCATION AND ACCESS

Refugio Amazonas is our newest 24-bedroom lodge, opened in 2005. Its location two hours upriver from Posada Amazonas is ideal for stand alone three night experiences and for breaking the expeditions to and from Tambopata Research Center.

Refugio Amazonas is built on a 200-hectare private reserve on the buffer zone of the Tambopata National Reserve. It is becoming integrated to the communities of Brazil nut extractors that surround it, attempting to extend the benefits of ecotourism to the families that commit to the sustainable use of the forest within this buffer zone.

To get here you must fly to Puerto Maldonado from Lima or Cusco on daily commercial flights lasting 30 or 90 minutes respectively. From the airport you are transported by truck to the Infierno River Port where you board our boats for the two and half hour trip to Refugio Amazonas. Refugio Amazonas is located ten minutes walking from the river.

REFUGIO AMAZONAS – WHO IS IT FOR?

Refugio Amazonas is ideal for three night outings, travel to Tambopata Research Center, or families because:

- It takes over three hours to get there from Puerto Maldonado and most of your first afternoon is spent on the river. Therefore, you should spend at least three nights at Refugio Amazonas to have time to fully explore the surrounding primary forest.
- The extra two hours of travel time are well paid in increased possibilities to encounter wildlife (the further from Puerto Maldonado, the less people there are, the less pressure on wildlife there is).
- Refugio Amazonas offers all of Posada Amazonas' activities with one great addition: an authentic Brazil nut trail and camp.
- For those traveling to Tambopata Research Center, it brings you two hours nearer to your final destination (see Tambopata Research Center programs).
- For those traveling with children it offers the only attraction especially made for children, by children, in the Peruvian Amazon – The Children's Rainforest Trail.

REFUGIO AMAZONAS - INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Accommodation

Refugio Amazonas is built using a combination of traditional native materials (wood, palm fronds, wild cane and clay) and architecture and modern day eco-lodge technology. The lodge consists of three wings of 8 rooms connected by raised boardwalks to a central, two-story, twenty-foot tall common area. This area has distinct areas serving as lobby, dining room, bar, shop and lounge. This structure is the heart of Refugio's atmosphere: it provides great canopy views of the surrounding forest - from a hammock ... and a whistle away from a drink!

The entire roof of the lodge is constructed using high quality crisneja palm fronds, whereas the floors are of tropical mahogany. The rooms complex is built of three 32 meter long structures with eight rooms per facility, for a total of 24 double bedrooms.

The rooms are 7 x 4 meters so they can comfortably hold three beds, although most are set up for two. The walls dividing each room are built using cane, and extend from the floor to about 2.5 meters in height making each room private. The side that looks out to the forest does not have a

wall or screening of any kind, acting as a large window facing the forest. The reason we have been able to incorporate this "luxurious" design into our lodge is because mosquitoes are not really a problem around the lodge clearing and the open section allows for an intimate contact with the rain forest. A second small window on the opposite side, set up very high, keeps the rooms well ventilated. Doors are replaced with drapes. Rooms are not soundproof.

Each room has a private bathroom with cold water only. Rooms and bathrooms are separated by drapes. Each room has beds, mosquito nets, bedside tables and hammocks or lounge chairs.

Meals

We provide self-serve three course meals at Refugio Amazonas. Meals consist of soup or appetisers, salad, main course, and desserts combining Peruvian and international cuisine. All fresh fruits and salads are thoroughly disinfected before serving. We also provide at all times unlimited amounts of boiled, filtered, cooled drinking water, coffee or tea and we provide fruit juices during the meals. If any visitor has special dietary requirements, we are happy to make individual arrangements, but please notify us.

Communication

Refugio Amazonas is in daily HF radio contact with our offices in Puerto Maldonado and Lima from where we are able to communicate by email, fax or phone with the rest of the world.

Lighting and electricity

Refugio Amazonas has no electricity. Lighting is provided by numerous kerosene lamps and candles. A generator is turned on once a day to recharge batteries for guests or lodge facilities. At night it is very dark, so we recommend good flashlights.

REFUGIO AMAZONAS ACTIVITIES

The following is the Refugio Amazonas activity list. Some of them are included in our programs. Some of them are not included in our programs but can be included at no additional price by substituting it for an included activity. If there is an activity you feel like doing, but don't find it here, then let us know anyway, you may help us design a new activity.

Kayaking on the Tambopata River: No previous experience is required. A boat will bring us upriver and then we will paddle down a portion of the Tambopata River with some rapids, although most of the progress presents low difficulty. At the shores we will observe fragmented parts of the forest and come across with locals that work at the few farms in the region. To finish our experience, we'll stop on a sandy beach and take a well deserved bath. No experience required, only swimming knowledge. Not included in the fee, recommended for everyone. Time: 2-3hrs, cost US\$65 per person, max. 10 people.

Canopy climbing: Replicating the daily work of macaw researchers, we will climb a 30-metre high tree with a rope, harness and jumar. From this vantage point we will have a macaw's eye view of the forest. This demanding exercise is perfectly safe and requires no previous experience. Not included on the fee, recommended for most program participants. Cost US\$40 per person, maximum 10 people.

Variety of holistic treatments ranging from aromatherapy to mud baths, massages and herbal baths. Not included in the fee, recommended for everyone. Cost US\$35 per person; please contact me for more details.

Children's rainforest trail: Ania & The World's Voice: A short trail designed for children with the help of ANIA (Association for Children and their Environment), an environmental education NGO.

Kids aged 4-10 hike with a guide through a challenging (but short) trail where they follow maps, solve riddles and find clues that will lead them to Ania's "gifts". The trail teaches kids how people live in the rainforest and leaves a valuable message from Ania, "a girl born in the depths of the rain forest to fill our hearts with hope". The concept, the story and the trail are trademarked by ANIA, a non profit organisation with the mission of creating 100,000 hectares of "Tierras de los Niños" (Children's Lands) - private protected areas managed by children. Parents are welcome to join. Not included in the fee. Cost: US\$60 per person.

Children's rainforest trail: Ania & The Forest's Treasure: Trail designed by ANIA, somewhat longer, which requires a five minute boat ride. Features include Ant City, the search for the lost Brazil nut, a shihuahuaco tree to climb and a visit to Ania's home near Lake Condenado. Parents are welcome to join. Not included in the fee. Cost: US\$60 per person.

Jungle mountain biking: Our ride begins 10 minutes from the lodge, and then loops 10 kilometres through mature forest and numerous creek beds. Not included in the fee, recommended for soft adventure travellers. Cost US\$35 per person, maximum 10 people.

Biking to Puerto Maldonado at the end of your program: Change the engine for pedals and ride back to Puerto Maldonado on a mountain-bike. An early boat will take you to the Tambopata River Port in the Native Community of Infierno. From there you will bike back the 20 kilometre road to Puerto Maldonado that has short slopes and presents little technical difficulty, but it will be hot and sweaty. At our Puerto Maldonado Office a shower will await you. Afterwards you will be driven to the airport. This activity is always subject to airline departure times. Not included in the fee, recommended for everyone. Cost: US\$200 per person, max. 10 people.

Canopy tower: A thirty minute walk from Refugio Amazonas leads to the 25 meter scaffolding canopy tower. A bannistered staircase running through the middle provides safe access to the platforms above. The tower has been built upon high ground, therefore increasing your horizon of the continuous primary forest extending out towards the Tambopata National Reserve. From here views of mixed species canopy flocks as well as toucans, macaws and raptors are likely. Included in the fee, recommended for everyone.

Sachavacayoc oxbow lake: A two hour hike takes you to Sachavacayoc (tapir) Lake. You will then paddle around the lake in a catamaran, searching for the resident family of five giant river otters (seen by about 30% of lake visitors) and other lakeside wildlife such as caiman, hoatzin and horned screamers. We hike out at dawn - when otters are active. Don't forget the two hour return hike! For those who do not want to take the long hike Condenado Lake, thirty minutes from the lodge, is an option. Included in the fee, recommended for everyone.

Condenado oxbow lake: A forty minute hike takes you Condenado Lake. You paddle canoes around the lake looking for lakeside wildlife such as hoatzin and caiman, hoping to see the otters which are infrequently seen here. You will also be rewarded with overhead sightings of macaws.

Parakeet clay lick: A fifteen minute boat ride and sixty minute walk from Refugio Amazonas is a parakeet clay lick. From a blind you will see parakeets descend on most clear days to ingest the clay on a bank. Species such as Dusky headed and Cobalt winged Parakeet descend at this clay lick. We visit the lick at dawn, when parrots are most active or in midmorning or early afternoon, when they are active. Included in the fee, recommended for everyone.

Mammal clay lick: Twenty minutes walking from Refugio Amazonas is a peccary clay lick. These wild rain forest pigs show up in herds of five to twenty individuals to eat clay in the late morning. Chances of spotting them are around 15%, but well worth the short hike. Other wildlife also visits, including deer, guan and parakeets. Included in the fee, recommended for everyone.

Farm visit and ethnobotanical garden: Five minutes downriver from the lodge lies a farm owned and managed by charismatic Don Manuel from the neighbouring community of Condenado. He grows a variety of popular and unknown Amazon crops - just about every plant and tree you see serves a purpose. He has also identified and cultivated many of the medicinal plants used in the region in a little backyard garden. Included in the fee, recommended for everyone.

Brazil nut trail and camp: A few minutes hike from the lodge is a beautiful old growth patch of Brazil Nut forest that has been harvested for decades (if not centuries) where the precarious remains of a camp used two months a year by Brazil Nut gatherers can still be experienced. We will be demonstrating the whole process of the rain forest's only sustainably harvested product from collection through transportation to drying. Included in the fee, recommended for everyone.

Time- off: Time off to relax and enjoy the lodge surroundings, try out a new trail, or repeat your favorite activity. Included in the fee, recommended for everyone.

Night walks: You will have the option of hiking out at night, when most of the mammals are active but difficult to see. Easier to find are frogs with shapes and sounds as bizarre as their natural histories. Included in the fee, recommended for everyone.

Caiman searches: We will be out at the river's edge at night, scanning the shores with headlamps and flashlights to catch the red gleams of reflection from caiman eyes. Included in the fee, recommended for everyone.

Video presentations: Video presentations are available every night at the interpretation center. Topics include the Tambopata National Reserve and the macaw project. Included in the fee, recommended for everyone.

Tambopata National Reserve lecture: Nightly lectures prepared by the staff of Refugio Amazonas cover conservation threats, opportunities and projects in the Tambopata National Reserve. Included in the fee, recommended for everyone.

Fishing: The Quebrada Gato, a twenty minute boat ride from Refugio Amazonas, is the only creek in the entire Tambopata basin that consistently offers the chance to catch dogfish, a fighter, as well as large catfish and other local species. Not included in the fee, recommended for soft adventure and family travellers.

Mammal clay lick camp: A double treat - we will experience a night out camping in the forest AND we will do it close to the mammal clay lick. If tapir, red brocket deer, peccaries or other mammals show up we will be there to see them. Not included in the fee, recommended for academic travellers and families.

Rainforest tattoo: Five minutes from the lodge lives Don Manuel, who grows a variety of popular and unknown Amazon crops - just about every plant and tree you see serves a purpose. At Don Manuel's farm, we will prepare a paste from the fruit of huito and achiote to draw dark blue and red tattoos on ourselves. They last several days. Not included in the fee, recommended for academic travellers and families.