

Day 1

Quito to Coca

Your journey starts with a 35-minute flight from Quito to Coca (included in the trip price) where staff will meet you upon arrival. You are then will transfer to the banks of the Napo River where your bilingual guides will give a safety briefing before embarking on a 2 and a half hour boat trip on the largest Ecuadorian affluent of the Amazon, the Napo River. During the journey, you get your first taste of the Amazon and the ancestral communities, life on the river, and birdlife such as herons, egrets and vultures. A packed lunch will be provided.

The motorized canoe ride is followed by a 15-minute walk through flooded forest and a 20-minute paddle canoe ride across the beautiful Challuacocha blackwater oxbow lake. The lodge staff warmly welcomes you with refreshing cold drinks and delicious snacks before settling down in our cabins.

After getting settled in, you take a short hike on nearby trails where you begin to get acquainted with the sights, smells and sounds of the Amazon jungle. As you enter the forest, sunlight is immediately filtered and you are faced with a million shades of green. A symphony of insect song fills the air, and your senses are instantly heightened. You may see one of the forest's 13 species of primate, birds, frogs, or extraordinary flora. The walk is one of discovery, and immediately tunes us in to the richness of Amazon ecosystem.

Return to the lodge for a chef-prepared dinner. The talented culinary staff at Sani Lodge is proud to offer a wide variety of delicious national and international cuisine. They are able to cater to a wide variety of dietary preferences, including for vegetarians and vegans. One of the bilingual guides will give a briefing about the Amazon region before you head out into the lagoon to search for nocturnal wildlife, paddling silently through its black waters. Someone's flashlight will almost certainly find eyeshine in the darkness - you might manage so see black caimans! Return to the lodge for overnight.

Note: There are 13 first class cabins of which 10 are double/single cabins. One is a mini suite cabin, 1 is a family cabin, and 1 is a multi-cabin with 4 rooms and 5 beds. All cabins are built with local wood, have window openings covered with mosquito nets and roofs made of toquilla straw leaves, and are equipped with fans and running water. These facilities are truly in harmony with the jungle and will allow you to live an unforgettable dream.

Day 2

Yasuni Wildlife Discovery

After breakfast at the lodge, set out for a full day of adventure in the rainforest. Take a long hike to learn about the plants, animals and people of the Amazon. You will discover medicinal uses for the rainforest's many plant species, search for impossibly small species of frog and startlingly large insect species, keep your eyes open for primates high in the forest canopy, and learn about the Sani culture. You will also hone our blow gun skills to understand survival hunting techniques.

After a full morning, you will enjoy a picnic lunch in the forest in a special spot chosen by your guide. Following lunch, make our way to the lagoon system where you will set out on kayaks for an afternoon of paddling. A stop at Sani Lodge's observation tower is a highlight.

You then wind your way up a 36 meter (108 ft) high staircase to the wooden observatory perched at the top of the forest canopy in majestic kapok (aka God's Hand) tree. The exhilaration of standing above the entire forest is quickly overtaken by the excitement of spotting some of the 565 registered species of birds. With some luck, there is also a chance to spot howler or squirrel monkeys or even sloths resting high in the canopy. The wildlife viewing from above is an entirely different perspective, and gives a chance to discover some of the Amazon's biodiversity that can be difficult if not impossible to see from the ground.

After getting your fill of wildlife watching from the tower, walk back to your kayaks for a (1 hour) recreational paddle back to the lodge. You will enjoy another delicious chef-prepared dinner before retiring for the night.

Day 3

Yasuni National Park Exploration and Indigenous Community Visit

After an early breakfast, depart for a visit to Yasuni National Park. This 9,620 sq km park is Ecuador's largest mainland park and is a UNESCO designated international biosphere reserve. The park was untouched by the last ice age, resulting in a thriving and diverse pool of species, and it is one of the last true wildernesses in Ecuador.

You walk in the park, observing its flora and fauna and make our way to a viewing blind near one of the park's famous clay licks. There we might be lucky to see parrots and parakeets. They visit most mornings to eat clay that aids their digestion of unripe seeds and fruits. You might see mealy Amazon, yellow-crowned, orange-winged and blue-headed parrots among others.

After your morning in Yasuni, visit the local Sani community. Here, you learn about and support their women's project, the community turtle breeding work, and also participate in a cooking class, which will become your traditional lunch. Spending time with the Sani women in the kitchen allows for a special glimpse into their culture and customs, and also insight into our many commonalities. We enjoy a very special, very local lunch in the community.

Your cultural exchange and exploration continues after lunch, when we will hike back to the lodge on a "camino vecinal" (minor road/community path) accompanied by your guide and a member of the local community. On your hike, we will get first-hand insight into local life while the Napo River flows by your side towards the Atlantic Ocean. You will learn about the local's architecture, see their farming activities, their lifestyle, discover plants in the rainforest that are used for medicine, and more.

You return to the lodge in the late afternoon for a well-deserved dinner. Optional night walk in the rain forest to see myriad insect, spider and frog species come to life in their nocturnal habitat.

Day 4

Reality Tour

After breakfast, make your way back to Coca for your flight back to Quito (included in the trip price). As you journey up the Napo River, you will learn about some of the challenges that local communities and ecotourism ventures face with the intense pressure that extractive industries place on the Amazon. Services end on your arrival into Quito airport.