

## 5 Unforgettable Eco-adventures at Peru's Award-Winning Eco-Lodge in the Amazon Rainforest.

Travelling in the Amazon rainforest at the age of sixty is not quite what you imagine in your twenties or thirties. While it might sound romantic or adventurous, I had no desire to pitch a tent deep within the jungle, at one with nature. Yet, I was keen to experience it in as authentic a way as possible.

The answer was Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica, an award winning eco-lodge in Peru's Amazon region.

Setting out from Lima, a short hop via StarPeru Airline, we arrive at Puerto Maldonado, the entry point to the Tambopata Reserve Region of the Peruvian rainforest. Here we board motorized canoes for our journey up the Madre de Dios River, a tributary of the mighty Amazon. As we skim along the waterway we are greeted by our first glimpses of wildlife, cayman sunning themselves on the shore, colorful macaws flitting amongst the treetops. Our hosts regale us with stories of their adventures and we are eager to experience all of it.

Arriving at Inkaterra, we are ushered to our home away from home, one of thirty-five cozy, thatched-roof cabanas nestled alongside the river amid dense jungle vegetation - eco-friendly bamboo structures with screened windows to keep the insects and critters out while allowing the sights, sounds and smells of the jungle to surround and embrace. Each cabana contains a sleeping area, complete with delicate netting to lower around the bed like a cocoon while you sleep. And each cabana has a screened porch outfitted with a hammock. Here you can nap after the day's adventures, lulled by the symphony of crickets and insects in the jungle around you.

We are equipped with a pair of sturdy rubber boots, a flashlight and a lantern.

You see, we are in the jungle, off the grid. Generators supply electricity for a few hours each day when it is needed to run the complex. The rest of the time visitors rely on candles, flashlights and lanterns. There is no TV or internet, no cellphone reception. Here you relax, unwind, tune out the stress of everyday life and tune in with nature. Initially it is an effort to slow down enough, to sit perfectly still and quiet, listening intently for the sounds of the macaws or monkeys in the trees; or the scurrying of the *acouti* as they gather hazelnuts beneath the cabana; or to search with the beam of a flashlight for giant tarantulas on a pitch black evening nature walk through the jungle paths.

Inkaterra operates two properties in the Peruvian Amazon on the Madre de Dios River. Recently honored by National Geographic as one of The Unique Lodges of the World, Inkaterra Hacienda Concepcion and its sister lodge, Inkaterra Reserva Amazonica, offer self-contained cabanas centered around a welcoming main lodge where guests gather for gourmet-level meals, all prepared with fresh local ingredients from the surrounding area. The food is mouth-watering, surpassed only by the service as staff hover, eager to tend to your every need.

The first order of business is to meet at the Eco-Learning Centre. Here visitors create their own agenda, choosing from the many intriguing activities available. Inkaterra's guides are superb, hand-picked and groomed to share their knowledge and passion with visitors, ecotourism at its best.

## Five favorite activities you have to try: ([There are more.](#))

1. *Rainforest by Night.* Trek through the rainforest trails as daylight ebbs, with only the beam of your flashlight, on the lookout for nocturnal wildlife - spiders, tarantulas, scorpions.
2. *Wetlands Tour.* Follow the 200-meter boardwalk over the rainforest swamps, elevated one meter above the marshlands, home to amphibians, reptiles, snakes, birds and mammals.
3. *Canopy Walkway.* Ascend the 100 foot high tower and follow the suspended pathways and hanging bridges through the treetops on the lookout for toucans, woodpeckers, trogons, parrots, macaws.
4. *Canopy Treehouse.* Built amid rainforest treetops at one end of the Canopy Walkway, this unique cabana offers one of most fascinating travel experiences in the Amazon. Named by Forbes magazine as one of the *Top Ten Resorts with Sky-High Views*, guests can rent the Treehouse, where room-service has a whole new meaning.
5. *Hacienda Concepcion.* Take a canoe ride on a still jungle lake, the only sounds being the dipping of the paddle, the buzzing of the insects and the calling of the birds in the treetops. Scan the treetops for monkeys and sloths, alert for turtles, sun grebes, nightjars and herons along the watery shore. Explore the botanical gardens as a guide shares the natural and traditional medicinal properties still used today in rural Peru.

Inkaterra welcomes you. You are family, you are special. In the evening light, large overstuffed chairs and settees invite guests to sit, relax and visit. In the quiet stillness you hear insects, birds, animals; there are no barriers here. This simple, yet luxurious lodge, has been an ecotourism pioneer for 40 years, promoting innovative sustainable use of the Southern Peruvian Rainforest, and supporting important scientific investigations since its opening in 1975.

Three or four day packages are popular, but I would recommend the longer. You may even have time to treat yourself to a soothing massage at UNA Spa, using exotic ingredients derived from local botanical extracts.

Learn more about all that [Inkaterra](#) has to offer.

To book your Amazon adventure: <https://reservations.inkaterra.com/>

## **Awards and Recognitions**

*Virtuoso* Sustainable Tourism Leadership Award 2015

*Travel + Leisure* – World's Best Awards 2015 - World's Best Hotels - #3 in Central & South America

*Lonely Planet* - Top 10 eco hotels for 2014

*World Travel & Tourism Council* Tourism for Tomorrow Awards, Conservation Category, 2012

*Condé Nast Traveler Reader's Choice Awards 2014*: Top hotels in Central and South America

*Travel + Leisure* Global Vision Award, Environmental Stewardship, 2011