

PROJECT AMAZONAS, INC.

TRAVEL TO THE PERUVIAN AMAZON (28 Dec 2021 update)

COVID-19 INFORMATION

Current vaccination status in Peru (as of 24 Dec 2021 data):

- 63.8% fully vaccinated
- 73.5% fully or partially vaccinated
- 8.9% boosted.

Travel to Peru is wide open for travelers from most countries (apart from a few countries in Southern Africa). Current requirements are:

- For fully vaccinated travelers with a vaccination card in hand, Peru no longer requires the presentation of a negative PCR test.
- For travelers who are not fully vaccinated or who are unvaccinated, presentation of negative PCR results taken within 48 hours of travel is required.
- All travelers (regardless of vaccination status) must fill out a sworn declaration “*declaracion jurada*” on-line within 48 hours of travel. This can be done on your cell phone but is much easier to fill out on computer. Step by step details for filling this out are given at the end of this document (**Appendix I**).
- As of 10 December 2021, all passengers on domestic flights within Peru must also be fully vaccinated (with digital or physical vaccination card) or present negative PCR results. Previously there were no requirements for domestic flights.
- Requirements for flying to the USA remain unchanged. A negative antigen (rapid) test result is all that is required. There are multiple labs in Iquitos that offer these tests, with results printed out and in hand in 5-60 minutes, depending on the lab. The cost is \$20 to \$22 for these tests. The antigen test results are checked by the airline before you board your flight in Lima. Upon arrival in the USA, there are no questions or additional procedures - just the normal process of passing through immigration and customs. [Note: if you are obtaining a PCR test for Peruvian domestic flights, that will also suffice for the Peru to USA flight.]
- Double masks (cloth and/or surgical or N95 or equivalent) are required for all travelers over the age of 2 on flights, other public transportation, in airports, banks, government offices, large stores, etc. Have an extra supply handy.
- Get to the airport 3 hours in advance - this time they really mean it. Check in is slow, baggage handling is slow, security is slow. Multiple people have been turned away from my recent flights and rebooked on later flights for not having all the required documents. If you have a connection prior to getting to the flight that will actually take you to Peru, make sure you have plenty of connecting time. An hour between flights might not be sufficient.

Being fully vaccinated (and boosted) is the safest and most convenient status for travel, so we recommend that only fully vaccinated persons consider travel to the Peruvian Amazon. Obtaining a PCR test (for flights from Iquitos to Lima) can only be done in Iquitos, and anyone needing one would be required to return Iquitos a full two days early in order to have test results in time for flights back to Lima and on to the USA or other final destination.

Make a scan of your vaccination card to keep on your cell phone, as well as a back-up photocopy. Putting the vaccination card in a protective plastic sleeve (or sealable quart zip-lock bag) along with your passport is also a good idea.

OTHER HEALTH INFORMATION

Apart from covid-19 vaccinations, no other vaccinations or preventative treatments are required for air travel between most countries and Peru. We DO strongly recommend that medical expedition participants (in particular) be up to date on recommended vaccinations for obvious reasons! Specialized medical attention may be difficult to secure on the remote rivers the expeditions visit, so do bring an ample supply of any medications that you might be using and let us know of any conditions that we should be aware of.

While no inoculations other than for Covid-19 are required for entering Peru, we do recommend that you follow the [CDC's Peru travel guidelines](#), which recommends tetanus, typhus and hepatitis A vaccinations along with other precautions. All travelers should consult with their physician regarding malaria prophylaxis and other health matters.

For malaria prophylaxis we recommend malarone or doxycycline and strongly discourage Lariam, which produces unpleasant side effects in many people. Be sure to bring enough prescription medications, and other basic first-aid materials (antihistamine cream, antacid, anti-diarrheals, nausea medication (if you are particularly prone to air- or seasickness), topical antibiotic cream, etc.) to last for the trip duration plus several extra days. Note that there haven't been cases of rabies in "our" region for decades, and that yellow-fever cases are very localized in very remote areas near the Ecuadorian border – none have been reported in "our" area.

Expenses for emergency medical care, evacuation or hospitalization are not covered by expedition contributions, and are not the responsibility of Project Amazonas. Check with your health insurer or travel insurance to verify that you will be covered while in Peru.

A wealth of reliable health information about travel to tropical countries is available. A good site to start is the [Travel Health Information Service](#). Don't take your medical advice from the musings of some dude who sells pillows.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Each trip differs in its details, but all trips share much in common. This information will help with planning and packing. Some portions of this document will refer specifically to medical service expeditions or other types of trip – they will be clearly noted as such.

- **Expedition size:** Most expeditions have 10-14 participants. To ensure space and to obtain better airfares, book early! Peak travel times in Peru are the Dec/Jan holiday season, and national holidays in Jul/Aug. At these times, airline seats may be limited or expensive if you don't book early.
- **Quoted expedition costs** are for the in-country (i.e., from Iquitos, Peru) ground/river portion of travel only, and do not include domestic or international airfare. Hotel accommodations in Iquitos are included only where specified, though we are happy to make reservations for you. All river travel (boat) and field station accommodations and meals ARE included in expedition costs. For academic groups, costs are generally all-inclusive unless specified otherwise.
- **Air Travel:** We do not book airfares ourselves, as there are many Internet and other options for doing so. Please refer to the "*Contact & Airport Information*" document for additional details.

Included in all trips (unless specified otherwise):

- All river transportation with the type of boat depending on the expedition.
- All field station and/or boat accommodations during the expedition, with bedding and linens (sheets, towels, pillows, mattress, mosquito netting – you do not need to bring any of these items nor a sleeping bag).
- All meals during the river and/or field station portions of your expedition – we do our best to accommodate vegetarians and others with specific dietary restrictions or preferences.
- Translator/guide services, boat crew services, field station use fees (if spending any nights at one of the Project Amazonas field stations).

NOT included in a standard expedition:

- Domestic and international airfare from your hometown to Iquitos, Peru.
- Hotel accommodation in Iquitos before or after the river/field station portion of your expedition (except for academic and service group participants). We are always happy to make recommendations and reservations.
- Any hotel accommodations or additional transportation while traveling to/from Iquitos, Peru (e.g., in Lima or the USA).
- Expenses for emergency medical care, evacuation, or hospitalization (ensure that your medical insurance will cover you in Peru)
- Fees for passports and other travel documents.
- Adult beverages - you are always welcome to bring your own.

- Prescription medicines, insect-repellent, personal toiletry items, etc.
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Travel Insurance:

We do not offer travel insurance, but recommend that you protect yourself, your airline tickets, and your equipment through the purchase of traveler's insurance.

In case your Homeowners or Medical policies do not cover you abroad, you can purchase special travel coverage through a company such as TravelSafe or American Express or add trip insurance when you purchase your flights on-line.

Money Exchange:

Money exchange is easy. US dollars are widely accepted in cities in Peru, and most stores/hotels will change dollars into Nuevo Soles (the Peruvian currency) at the official rate. For a standard expedition, you'll have few opportunities to spend money, but might wish to have some funds for souvenirs, drinks, etc. in different communities along the way, and of course for hotel/food in Iquitos before/after the trip. US \$200 to \$300 should be more than sufficient. Credit cards are increasingly accepted at stores, and most restaurants and hotels. All ATMs dispense both US dollars and Peruvian Soles and are widely available in any larger city. Cash advances from credit cards can be made at some banks. **US or Euro bills must be unworn and free of tears and blemishes, or they will not be accepted. Vendors may reject bills with even very tiny rips!** Do not change money in airports or outside of Peru – you'll receive a terrible exchange rate (the sole exception being the **Banco de la Nación** counter in the baggage claim area of Lima airport). Withdrawing Peruvian Soles directly from ATM's gives you the best exchange rate (better even than changing funds in a bank), and ATMs are available in airports. When you do change funds, ask for small bills and try to get coins while in Iquitos – small change is in chronic short supply in rural areas.

Travel Documents and Legal Considerations:

Entering Peru is generally simple and fast. Citizens of the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, the EEC and some other countries are required only to have a valid passport. Citizens of other countries should contact the nearest Peruvian embassy/consulate for requirements. Apart from Covid-19, you do NOT need to have a vaccination card or proof of inoculations to enter Peru (but if you travel overland from Peru to Brazil, Brazilian authorities may require proof of additional vaccinations, including yellow fever).

- Firearms and ammunition are forbidden for import, or to carry or convey to another person.
- Drug offenses are severely punished, and Peruvian jails are not luxurious.

- If your passport will expire within 6 months of the desired entry date, you will need to apply for a new passport – the airline will otherwise deny you boarding for your flight to Peru. Peru allows up to a six-month stay for visitors, so your passport needs to be valid when you depart the country.

Environmental Regulations and Wildlife Laws:

Most Peruvian wildlife is protected by law and is not legal to purchase or sell (although it can be used directly by rural inhabitants for food or other purposes). Peruvian and international regulations and laws also prohibit the international transportation of items made in whole or in part from protected wildlife (this includes many commonly offered souvenirs which may include animal skin, teeth, bones and feathers – don't buy them!). Likewise, it is illegal to transport live animals or plants without the necessary corresponding permits and inspections – these can be difficult and expensive to obtain, and we generally cannot assist you with such permits. Transport of animals, plants, or animal parts without the necessary permits may subject you to travel delays, fines, or criminal prosecution. It is your responsibility to be aware of relevant laws and regulations, and to abide by Peruvian and international laws for the protection of flora and fauna. Even though possessing a particular item *might* be legal in Peru, it might not be legal in your country of destination, so take that into account as well.

Communications:

Once in Iquitos, you can easily phone or e-mail internationally. Most hotels and many restaurants have wi-fi, but connection and download times can be slow. Internet phone connection is available in many cybercafés and is the cheapest way of phoning internationally. If you plan on bringing a cell phone with you, check with your provider to see if you will need a chip installed, or other adjustments made. Most smart phones will function without any adjustments needed, but you can purchase a SIM card in Iquitos if your phone operates on the GSM system (T-Mobile and AT&T phones use the GSM system; Sprint and Verizon phones can't take a SIM card unless they are the newer LTE models). Pay phones are all but extinct; don't expect to find a working one.

To call Peru from the USA, first dial 011-51, then the local phone number. The "011" indicates international calling, "51" is the Peru country code. There is limited phone service in rural areas outside of Iquitos. Do not expect reliable email access outside of Iquitos, but you should be able to text if you have a GSM phone, and cell coverage is gradually expanding. Many Peruvians use WhatsApp for calling internationally and if you have a contact in Peru with WhatsApp, it is easy to call that contact from the USA (provided you have internet service at the time).

Electricity, Outlets, & Battery and Camera Charging:

Electrical current in Peru is 220V. Our large riverboat has a step-up/step-down transformer if you have something that can only be charged with 110V. Most camera, laptop, phone and battery charge units already have built in adaptors – check on the

back, and if it says 100V-240V, then you can plug it in to any outlet without worrying about the voltage. Electrical outlets in Peru accept either two flat (parallel), or two round prongs. Three-prong outlets are rare. You may wish to bring a plug adaptor (three-prong to two-prong) with you, or you can purchase one very cheaply at any hardware store (ferretería) in Iquitos.

Climate:

The Iquitos area, less than 3 1/2 degrees south of the Equator, is characterized by strong tropical sun and a warm humid climate. The dominant vegetation is rain forest. Temperature varies from the mid- to high 80's F during the day, night-time temperatures typically drop 10 degrees F or even more in the summer (dry season) months of July-September. Rain normally occurs during the afternoon or night, and humidity levels are high. The 'dry' season corresponds to the northern summer, and is the coolest time of year, with occasional cold fronts in July-August (temperatures in the 60's F). The climate in Lima can be humid and cold, and it is advisable to bring a sweater or light jacket for use in Lima or on flights. This may also come in handy if you are in the Amazon during a cold front. During the dry season, several days may pass without rain, but normally there will be some rain several times during a week. The 'rainy' season corresponds to the northern winter. During the rainy season, temperatures are higher, the nights warmer, and rain can be expected on a daily basis, though all-day rains are infrequent.

The tropical sun is intense, and it is very easy to burn or become dehydrated. Appropriate clothing and headwear and high SPF sunblock are a necessity. You should also take a water bottle with you at all times (and drink from it!).

What to Bring: A Generalized Packing List

- Personal toiletry articles, shampoo, disposable razors, etc. All of these are widely and cheaply available in Iquitos.
- Prescription medicines – sufficient to last the trip plus a few days.
- Malaria prophylaxis – for this to be effective, you will need to begin taking the treatment prior to, or at the start of your trip, and continue treatment for a short period following your trip; consult your physician. **Avoid Larium** – this medication produces unpleasant side effects in many people. Malarone or doxycycline are preferable. Doxycycline is available over the counter in Peru.
- Other medications such as Tylenol/Aspirin or similar, antihistamine lotion (for insect bites), antibiotic ointment (Neosporin or similar), Pepto-Bismol or other similar medication for upset stomach, diarrhea, or nausea (in case of motion sickness on moving boats). High SPF sunscreen (at minimum 15 SPF).
- Insect repellent (Muskol, Jungle Juice, etc. - high DEET content). Citronella and other 'natural' insect repellents are largely ineffective in the Amazon. Sulfur powder is effective against chiggers – these may be encountered around villages but are not present at our field stations or in the forest itself. New repellents containing picaridin are a good alternative to ones containing DEET. If your

repellent does contain DEET, be aware that it melts plastic and can severely damage cameras, binoculars, lens coatings, plastic tents and screens, ponchos, etc. It is also toxic to amphibians and fish. Apply it only outside and away from gear, and don't handle animals if you have it on your hands. Hi Deet-content insect repellent is not generally available in Iquitos.

- Flashlight with extra batteries and bulbs (NOTE: D and AA sizes are the only batteries commonly available in Peru, and quality can be poor. LED flashlights are excellent for general use – many come with rechargeable batteries).
- Tennis shoes or other canvas-topped shoes that dry quickly, with rubber soles. These should be broken in already; you don't want to get blisters on your Amazon trip! These are for wearing in town, on board your boat, or on the plane home.
- Hiking boots, jungle boots, or gum-rubber boots. Again, be sure these are well broken in! Be aware that if you are hiking on jungle trails, visiting villages, and having a real Amazon experience, your footwear will get wet and muddy. Gum-rubber boots (farmer boots, wellies, etc.), are popular with experienced jungle travelers, they are cheap, easy to put on and take off (no muddy laces), dry quickly, easy to clean, and provide excellent protection against snakes, insects and thorns, to say nothing of mud. They also have excellent tread for walking on slippery trails. Whatever you select, be sure that your footwear is comfortable and broken in. Rubber boots can be readily purchased in Iquitos for \$7-\$8/pair (for size 11 and smaller).
- Binoculars. Invest in a good pair of lightweight binoculars that are water resistant, if not waterproof. Your travel experience will be enhanced if you can examine birds, treetop flowers, dolphins, monkeys, and miscellaneous happenings along the route! A good pair will give you years of use.
- Camera/Smart Phone. Why travel to the Amazon without a good camera (that you know how to use...)? Don't forget extra batteries or a battery charger. A bag of silica gel to dry out damp equipment is a good idea.
- Hat with wide brim or bill (essential for the tropical sun, useful also for rain).
- Fannypack or small backpack, weather proof.
- A **battery operated portable fan** can make sleeping at night much more comfortable. Foldable models are readily available at sporting goods stores and large department stores (Wal-Mart, K-Mart, etc.). Don't forget the batteries.
- Light poncho or rain jacket (essential for small boats).
- Lightweight shorts and pants (avoid jeans which take a long time to dry and become heavy when wet).
- Lightweight shirts, both long/short sleeves.
- Swimwear – swimming in the Amazon and its tributaries is very refreshing, and piranhas and the infamous candirus are NOT an issue!
- Underwear and socks – cotton is best for keeping you dry and comfortable. Full-length socks are great for padding your feet if you wear rubber boots.
- Lightweight jacket or windbreaker – in the dry season (northern summer), it can feel quite cool at night or during boat travel.
- Polarized sunglasses – great for river travel, the glare off the surface of the water can be intense.

- Trade items: popular ones include D-cell batteries (in their original packaging – proves that they are ‘fresh’), flashlights, T-shirts (especially smaller sizes, there aren’t many XXL people in the Amazon!), children’s and women’s clothing, women’s makeup, sheets, towels, candy, ceramic busts of Elvis (OK, that’s a joke, but you never know – maybe you can start a cult!), knives, scissors, fish hooks and fishing line, baseball caps, etc. Use your imagination – if you bring clothing, remember that most Peruvians are smaller than the average ‘gringo’ – small sizes are better! Please don’t bring ratty stuff that you yourself wouldn’t wear!
- Books in Spanish and basic school and medical supplies make great donations to poorly equipped rural schools.

Camera and Photography Equipment:

The Amazon is a photographer’s paradise – bring the best camera you have! Video cameras can get excellent footage even in low light situations. Carry resealable plastic bags for rain protection. Silica gel is good for drying camera gear overnight (have an airtight container or two handy – gallon zip-locks will do the trick).

Laundry:

We have opportunity on most expeditions to have some laundry done at one point in time or another. You can also hand-wash small amounts of laundry daily if you wish – we have wash basins and detergent on board the Esperanza riverboat and at the field stations. If on board boat, laundry can be hung over the rails (firmly attached with clothespins so it doesn’t end up in the river!) to dry. Of course, your laundry will be clearly visible to any passers-by, so perhaps leave the leopard-spot thong at home...

APPENDIX I: DECLARACION JURADA

There are mixed messages online about this requirement. Official Peruvian government websites (as of this date) do state that the *Declaracion Jurada de Salud* ("sworn declaration of health") is required, but communications from the airlines sometimes say that no additional documentation is required (ignore the airline – you do still need this!)

This is a digital form that must be filled out within 72 hours to 1 hour prior to boarding. It is also checked (along with your covid test results) upon arrival in Lima, Peru. Fill this out at home a day or two prior to travel - you'll need either a print-out or a screenshot of the declaration in order to travel. The app has an English version and has been recently simplified, but some of the instructions are not intuitive.

The link to the form is:

<https://e-notificacion.migraciones.gob.pe/dj-salud/>

Filling out the Declaracion Jurada de Salud

The page that pops up when you click the link will be titled "Affidavit of Health and Geolocation Authorization"

- Select your country of citizenship (for USA, that will be EE.UU, for "Estados Unidos, you won't find "USA" or "United States" on the list.
- Select the type of document - choose "PAS" for passport
- Enter your passport # (9 digits for US passport holders)
- Enter your date of birth - clicking twice on the "year" in the upper left-hand corner will take you to a range of years so that you don't have to scroll through month after month for X-number of years to get to your actual birth month.
- Select your birth year, and then your birth month (months are given with the Spanish abbreviations, but the only one that you might not figure out very easily is ENE (January).
- Select the day of the month, and then click the "SEARCH" button

The second page that pops up will be: **1. PERSONAL INFORMATION** (if you've filled this out before, it should be already populated with your name, nationality, passport # and DOB – otherwise you'll need to add in any missing info). You may notice that it has two spaces for "last name" - no worries, most Latin Americans have two surnames, while most Anglos only have one surname. As long as the first surname box is filled and matches what you have in your passport, you are A-OK.

- If not already selected, click the "international trip" button
- Select your date of arrival in Peru (the actual date you land, not the date you depart your point of origin.
- Select country of origin (EE.UU. again, for the USA)
- Fill in your gender, flight number, and any other required info.
- Select Destination Department - there are 24 Departments (=States) in Peru plus the special administrative region of Callao. If you are traveling with Project Amazonas or MT Amazon Expeditions, you'll most likely be traveling to **LORETO**. If you are traveling just to Lima, you would select **LIMA**, if to Cusco and Machu Picchu, you would select **CUZCO**.
- Select the destination Province - again, if you are traveling with Project Amazonas or MT Amazon Expeditions to Iquitos, you would select **MAYNAS** as the destination province.
- Select the destination District - for travelers to Iquitos, you would select **IQUITOS**.
- Even if you might be traveling onward to the Madre Selva Biological Station, Santa Cruz Forest Reserve (which are in different provinces and districts) or

aboard the Esperanza riverboat, stick with LORETO - MAYNAS - IQUITOS, you'll see why below.

- Contact phone number (i.e., land-line #) and contact cell number (mobile phone #). You will need to fill out BOTH SETS OF PHONE NUMBERS for the website to allow you to advance (but you can enter the same cell number twice). What the form doesn't indicate is that the numbers you enter MUST BE PERUVIAN PHONE NUMBERS. Your US landline or cell numbers will not be accepted, and you won't be able to complete the sworn declaration. If you have reservations at a hotel in Peru, you can provide the hotel number. If you are traveling with Project Amazonas and/or MT Amazon Expeditions, use the information below for our transfer agent or for myself (Devon). We will either be in Iquitos, and/or in regular contact with groups, so these are the best contacts. On my Nov/Dec 2020 trip, the Ministry of Health DID call up to ask if I was experiencing any Covid-19 symptoms. On subsequent trips (Jan, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Dec 2021) there was no follow-up.
 - The country code for Peru is: 51
 - City code for Iquitos is: 94 (even though you don't need to enter a city code to call Peru cell numbers, the form requires that you put something in that box!)
 - An actual cell number will be 9-digits long in Peru (not including the 51 or 94). A land-line hotel number may only indicate 6 digits, in which case you add "065" before the other 6 digits in order to turn it into a 9-digit number. Here are the contact options:

Graham, Devon (principal contact)
Cel: 921-902-195 (with 51 94 for country and city code)
Address: 2288 Avenida de la Marina, Punchana, Iquitos
Email: devon@projectamazonas.org

Guerra Flores, Luis Miguel (transfer agent)
Cel: 945-053-664 (with 51 94 for country and city code)
Address: 29 Independencia, Punchana, Iquitos
Email: luismi_0923@hotmail.com
- Add the email of your Peru contact (either of your hotel, or of the relevant contact above)
- "Real Address After the Isolation" sounds more ominous than it is. Use the same information that you put in the previous section
- Again, start with LORETO - MAYNAS – IQUITOS

- Then fill out the name of the person who will be with you at the isolation address (that would be either Devon Graham (age 61) or Luis Miguel Guerra Flores (age 35) for PA / MTAE travelers); both male.

This brings you to **II. HEALTH INFORMATION**

- Under "symptoms of family member or companion" or under "family or companion illnesses", there won't be any boxes to check (your contacts aren't exhibiting any of the listed symptoms, nor will we ever do so...)
- Click the two boxes toward the bottom, and click the green "Register" button.

If everything has been filled out correctly, the digital "sworn declaration" form should pop up – take a screenshot and also send it to your email and print it out. If some information is missing, you'll see red notification/error boxes. Correct those and try again.