



PROJECT DOSSIER

TRANS AMAZON TO THE LOST WORLD

LIMA to CARACAS
34 or 41 days
3,000 or 3150 kms (land distance)
by land and river, including 80 or 120 kms
trekking

Peru, Brazil, Venezuela

Itinerary Guideline

INCA TRAIL OPTION (Days 1-7)

- Day 1:** Fly from Lima to Cuzco – royal capital of the Inca Empire. Free time exploring Cuzco.
- Day 2:** Drive from Cuzco to the Urubamba Valley. Optional white water rafting before beginning the hike of the Inca Trail.
- Days 3 to 5:** Hike the Inca Trail through the hill forests and misty highlands to Machu Picchu – mountain citadel of the great Incas. Descend to the Urubamba River and the hot springs at Aguas Calientes. By train to the Indian town of Ollantaytambo.
- Day 6:** Visit the Inca site of Ollantaytambo and return to Cuzco via Pisac.
- Day 7:** Spend time in Cuzco exploring the sites, streets, markets and museums, shopping and resting.
- Day 8:** Fly back to Lima to begin the 34 day itinerary.



LIMA to CARACAS (Days 1-34 or 8-41)

- Day 1:** Arrive Lima - city of the Spanish viceroys (time on your own: gold museum, cathedrals & old city).
- Day 2:** Fly from Lima across the Andes to Iquitos on the upper Amazon – 3,650 kms inland from the river mouth on the Atlantic. In Iquitos.
- Days 3-6:** By motorised canoe to jungle camps. Day hikes into forest canopy & river grasslands - to Indian villages, swimming holes & life of the riverbanks. (Camping/jungle huts).
- Day 7:** Amazon 'fastboat', downstream from Iquitos to Leticia and Tabatinga - where Peru, Colombia & Brazil meet. (11-14hrs,

- Day 8:** Fly from Tabatinga to Manaus - old trading port in the heart of the Amazon River system.
- Day 9 & 10:** In and around Manaus (opera house & docks, swimming, boat to great confluence of Amazon & Rio Negro).
- Day 11:** By road Manaus to Santa Elena - overnight bus on the 'Trans Amazon Highway'. North across the equator to Boa Vista and the Venezuelan frontier at Santa Elena (approx. 20 hours).
- Day 12:** Arrive Santa Elena - lively town in the remote forest tablelands of the Gran Sabana.
- Day 13:** In Santa Elena. Relax in welcoming comforts & atmosphere of this friendly frontier town. Optional waterfall tour.
- Days 14-19:** Mt. Roraima Trek. Trails & steep mesa gullies to the flat top of Mt Roraima 2,810m - Conan Doyle's 'Lost World'. (Camping).
- Day 20:** In Santa Elena to relax.
- Day 21:** Fly Santa Elena to Kavak. In the afternoon visit the beautiful waterfalls of "La Cueva".
- Day 22:** Morning in Kavak. Afternoon travel to Kamarata and start the boat trip on headwaters of the Orinoco.
- Days 23-25:** Downriver by motorised canoe, rapids & rainforests of the misty highlands & Tepuis to the magnificent Angel Falls and Canaima. (Camping/riverbank huts).
- Day 26:** Fly Canaima to Ciudad Bolivar. Free afternoon.
- Days 27-28:** Chartered small bus, through Venezuela's rich coastal farmlands. Underground caverns & nocturnal birds at Guacharo caves.
- Days 29-32:** Warm beaches of the Caribbean.
- Day 33:** To Caracas. City of lights and late nights. Of high dining, slow cafes & low bars - far call from the great jungles a few hours beyond.
- Day 34:** Depart Caracas. End arrangements.

PLEASE NOTE

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes

together with the constraints of weather, road & river conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings.

Highlights & Route

Ocean going vessels have long plied the Amazon from the Atlantic to Manaus and Iquitos. South of here are the wild but not unknown territories of the Matto Grosso. North of the river is a different story. From Venezuela nothing ventured far inland from the beautiful Caribbean coastline and the highland farm belt. Beyond the Orinoco the land remained unexplored and virtually unknown. Of the 16th century conquistadors an adventurous few tried, and died, in search of El Dorado. Save for an occasional fervent missionary, hopeful miner and wayward pilot the region remained an enigma until the Trans Amazon 'highway' dared its way across the Orinoco in 1973. It is still a tenuous link from here to the Amazon, not far from the road stretch the thick jungles and dark rivers, the thundering waterfalls and mysterious flat top mesas of a lost and forgotten world. It is one of our last unknowns. And of them all, our least understood - a pure land of rivers and forest stretching 4,000 kms from the Tropic of Capricorn to the Caribbean, and the same distance again from the Andes to the Atlantic.

PERU (Inca Trail Extension only)

- Day 1:** Drive to Chilca & meet porters. 4 hours walking to ruins of Llactapata.
- Day 2:** Approx. 6 hours walking. Hardest day, starting with an easy hike up to Huayllabamba from where trail climbs steeply through forested hills to top of pass at 4,200 m. Spectacular views. Descend to Pacasmayo.
- Day 3:** Approx. 6 hours walking. Easier ascent to ruins of Runkuracay and down to Sayacmarca. Then through patches of light jungle and open tracts of wild flowers, frequently visited by humming birds. All around are the misty jungle shrouded mountains above the steep gorges of the Urubamba, best seen from the third pass above Phuyupatamarca. Reach Winay-Wayna, well preserved ruins of an Inca village.

Day 4: 2 hours hike over steep paths and narrow bridges to stairway of the Sun Gate and Machu Picchu - lost city of the Incas. This mysterious site atop a high mountain was never discovered by the Conquistadors. It remained hidden and empty in the mists until traced in 1911 by the explorer Hiram Bingham. Descend to the Urubamba River – and the hot springs at Aguas Calientes.

PERU

Founded in 1535, Lima was the seat of the viceroys and Spanish colonial power throughout South America, and continues today as a thriving and commercial city of 7 million people. Missionary zeal of the church is reflected in the Museum of the Inquisition. The Gold Museum details the magnificent artefacts of silver and gold from the Incas and has an amazing exhibition of weaponry and armoury from around the world. Gilded cathedrals and palaces, skyscrapers and fashionable chic. By air across the Andes to the headwaters of the Amazon and Iquitos. Apart from river and air access this fast growing city of 350,000 is completely isolated. Vehicles of all sizes crowd the streets, but all roads end a short distance from town. The grand and gilded mansions of the 19th century rubber barons stand in fading grandeur around the Plaza de Armas as Iquitos turns to the prospect of oil money and a new boom economy. It is 6-7 hrs by large motorised canoes to reach the outer limits of farm development from Iquitos. Staying in huts at river's edge we hike jungle trails to Indian villages; time to relax at streams & swimming holes or fish from the banks. Then downstream by Amazon riverboat from Iquitos. The Rio Napo joins to widen and strengthen the Amazon's flow, past large mid-river sand islands and small forest edge settlements. To Leticia and Tabatinga where Peru, Colombia and Brazil meet across a wide bend in the river.

BRAZIL

Fly Tabatinga - Manaus. The great trading port in the heart of the Amazon river system, city of chequered past, where the oily black waters of the Rio Negro slowly fuse with the massive muddy flow of the Amazon, now 8 kms wide. The city grew around the rubber industry that exploded at

the end of the 19th century. Vast and expansive fortunes were made, until a few plants were smuggled downriver to make their way to Malaysia and the breakdown of the tight monopoly of the rubber barons on this precious product. Today, with the advent of the Trans Amazon Highway, the city is again expanding and growing. The famous opera house has been restored, museums show the rise and fall of Manaus' past. North, by overnight bus along the sometimes rough and muddy Trans Amazon Highway, crossing the equator to Boa Vista and the Venezuelan frontier at Santa Elena.

VENEZUELA

The ground rises to the majestic scenery of the Gran Sabana watershed. Santa Elena is a friendly and thriving frontier town.

MT. RORAIMA TREK

- Day 14:** Santa Elena - Tek River Camp. By four-wheel drive vehicle to Paraitepui (approx. 4 hrs) where we meet our porters. Moderate walking with ascents and descents to the Rio Tek (approx. 4 hrs). (Camping).
- Day 15:** Tekko River - Mt Roraima Base Camp. (approx. 4 hrs). Wade the Rio Tek and across the Rio Kukenan deluging from the top of Kukenan. Time for swimming, then steadily uphill trails to base camp at 1,800m on the lower slopes of Mt Roraima 2,800m. Spectacular views across the jungles.
- Day 16:** Roraima Base Camp - Roraima Top (approx. 5 hrs). Difficult, steep track through thick forest growth then traversing rough ledges beneath pounding waterfalls and a jumble of high rock scree onto the mesa top. Camp under rock overhangs at summit. It is easy to step into the mystery and myth of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 'Lost World', novel of prehistoric life that sprang from his sighting of this great and remote mountain. (Camping).
- Day 17:** Roraima Top. On foot across the summit of the mesa 2,800m. The untouched formations, valleys and flora of a world lost in clouds, above

and beyond the influence and touch of mankind. No Pterodactyls, but mists gather and lightning forks - in an uncanny land that challenges and stretches the reaches of imagination. (Camping).

- Day 18:** Roraima Top - Tek River Camp. Descend the escarpment back to our river camp. (approx. 8 hrs). Massive 'tepui' mesas thrust from the jungle floor like green icebergs in the mist (Camping).
- Day 19:** Tek River - Santa Elena. Walk to Paraitepui (approx. 4 hrs), drive to Santa Elena & our hotel.
- Day 20:** Day in Santa Elena
- Day 21:** Fly straight to Kavak to visit beautiful La Cueva waterfalls.

CANAIMA RIVER EXPEDITION

- Day 22:** Kamarata - Ivana Meru. Downriver by motorised canoe (approx. 3 hrs). Our canoes supplied by the headman of Kamarata, our food and small comforts brought with us from Ciudad Bolivar, we head down the slow waters of the Akanan toward Salto Iwanqmaru. (Hammocks in huts).
- Day 23:** Ivana Meru - El Arenal (approx. 6 hrs). Continue downriver, stopping en route to hike into the rainforest. Views of jutting mesas and tepuis. Hammocks under simple hut roofs at Arenal encampment.
- Day 24:** From El Arenal to the Angel Falls. Up the Rio Churin to Angel Falls. Streams gather into a narrow channel on the table top of Auyan Tepui to leap its rim and drop 980m into the jungle below. These are the highest falls in the world, a magnificent spectacle unknown until 1937 when a pilot (Jimmy Angel) sighted them from the air. The best viewpoint is about half a mile from the base of the falls, but a wet and slippery hike can take us closer. Returning to camp at El Arenal.
- Day 25:** El Arenal - Canaima (2-4 hrs) Rainfall upstream can lower or elevate the river here, producing stretches of rapids or

very slow water. The Canaima lagoon is fed by spectacular waterfalls.

- Day 26:** Canaima - Ciudad Bolivar. Hike down to airstrip at Canaima. Short flight to Ciudad Bolivar. This town on the narrows of the river was once Angostura. Here in 1819 Simon Bolivar declared independence from Spain, and his presidency of Gran Colombia, (Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador). Ocean vessels still ply the 400 kms upriver to dock here, its markets still trade in gold and nuggets from the highlands and beyond.
- Days 27 to 33:** Drive to Ciudad Guayana where the Orinoco widens toward its delta. Over river by ferry, through the Monagas farmlands to the north east highlands, and the small town of Caripe. Nearby is a remarkable subterranean chain of caves that have been penetrated for 10km along a clear flowing stream. Thousands of Guacharo & other birds inhabit the series of caverns, beyond which is the deathly still Cave of Silence and the Well of the Wind. At dusk, thousands of Guacharo birds stream from the cave mouth to feed through the night on oil-palm fruit. Adapted for sightless flight these hawk-like birds navigate by emitting a clicking sound that is echoed back to them in a highly tuned system of radar. To the Caribbean coast. A few miles away, and hidden in Venezuela's most beautiful coastal scenery, is the fishing village of Mochima. Now, staying in local houses there is nothing more strenuous to do than sunbathe or relax under a thatch- roof cafe at water's edge or take a boat out to the swimming beaches. Finally the coast road to Puerto La Cruz, past cocoa plantations and fishing villages, to the city skyline of Caracas. The city stays up late - with restaurants, bars and a nightlife that's the law of a different jungle.
- Day 34:** Finish arrangements.

GROUP SIZE

14 max including Encounter staff. Local guides will be employed at certain places of interest where their knowledge is advantageous to our visit.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

If doing the Inca Trail Extension, most of the week is spent at altitudes of 3,400-4,200m and some effects of oxygen deprivation will be felt by all. The trail involves 4 days of moderately difficult walking at 2,800m – 4,200m through humid & forested mountain terrain.

The 34 day itinerary is spent in the heat and humid conditions of the Amazon. The Mt Roraima Trek to 2,800m is not a technical or specialised climb but involves 6 days of moderate walking through hot savannah terrain, the fording of 2 rivers and a steep & slippery ascent/descent of the mesa top. Fitness & a good sense of balance are definitely required. Temperatures on the approach are hot, but can drop to very cold on the exposed summit. Porters carry camping & communal equipment but you will need to carry your own sleeping bag & clothing on your back (approx. 10kgs). Travel by dugout & motorised canoe on the Canaima River Expedition.

THE LOCAL PAYMENT (as in the brochure)

This is the payment made to the Project Leader at the point of departure. This payment must be made paid in US\$ dollars, **in cash notes only**. This payment completes the total inclusive price of the project. This amount will be utilised by the project Leader to cover a proportion but not all of the 'on the ground' running costs of this project. There are no hidden extra payments.

INCLUDED IN PROJECT COST

All transport by land, river & internal flights, camping equipment & supplies, other accommodation as noted, food - 3 meals a day (except as noted under Meals Cooking & Food below), local guides (on Inca Trail) and on Amazon river from Iquitos, on Mt Roraima Trek & Canaima River Expedition, porters for camping/domestic equipment (on Inca Trail) and Mt Roraima Trek, entrance fees & activities as detailed from morning of Day 1 to morning of Day 34/41. There are no kitties or similar en route payment funds.

PROJECT COST DOES NOT COVER

Local Payment. International flights from home to Lima and back from Caracas, transfers to/from airports & airport taxes in connection with international flights, meals in Lima, (Cuzco), Manaus & Caracas (see Meals, Cooking & Food below). Accommodation in Lima/Caracas before Day 1 and on Day 34/41. Vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Individual porters for personal gear on Inca Trail – (US\$20 for whole trek), and on Mt Roraima Trek (approx US\$20 per day). Some entry fees to museums/sights (minimal cost).

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Sleeping mats, cooking equipment & utensils on Iquitos River project, with lightweight tents on Mt Roraima Trek, hammocks with mosquito nets on Canaima River expedition. Lightweight tents & cooking equipment on Inca Trail.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A medium weight sleeping bag, a backpack and a small daypack, rain & cool weather jacket. Personal clothing and strong footwear. No specialised clothing or equipment is necessary. Apart from perhaps a backpack & sleeping bag you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information.

TRANSPORT

Scheduled internal flights Lima-Cuzco return (Inca Trail Extension only), Lima-Iquitos & Tabatinga-Manaus, scheduled or chartered aircraft Santa Elena - Kavak & Canaima-Ciudad Bolivar, large motorised canoe & on foot Iquitos River project (4 days), 'fastboat' Amazon river ferryboat Iquitos-Tabatinga (approx. 11-14 hrs), overnight scheduled bus Manaus-Santa Elena (approx 24 hrs), four wheel drive vehicles Santa Elena to start of Mt Roraima Trek then on foot (6 days), chartered vehicle(s) Santa Elena-Ciudad Bolivar-Caracas, motorised dugouts on Canaima River Expedition (5 days).

INTERNAL FLIGHTS

The cost of our flights Lima-Cuzco return (Inca Trail Extension only), Lima-Iquitos, Tabatinga-

Manaus, Santa Elena - Kavak & Canaima-Ciudad Bolivar are all included. Ticketing/charter is arranged en route by Encounter and is not part of your international ticketing arrangements.

ACCOMMODATION

Traveller's hotels on multi-share basis in Lima (1 night), Cuzco (2 nights - Inca Trail Extension only), Iquitos (1-2 nights), Manaus (3 nights), Ciudad Bolivar (approx 2 nights) & Caracas (1 night). Country hotels & basic jungle lodges (best available, but often dormitory style accommodation) Tabatinga, Santa Elena, en route Santa Elena - Ciudad Bolivar & in Caripe. Local houses on Caribbean (group meal preparation for breakfast and lunch). Camping in jungle huts/shelters on Iquitos River project (3 nights), camping on Inca Trail (3 nights) and on Mt Roraima Trek (5 nights), camping/hammocks in riverside shelters, & camping on Canaima River Expedition (4-5 nights depending on river level). All camping is open 'bush' camping with no facilities. Frequent opportunity for river/stream bathing & basic hygiene. Arrangements end on morning of Day 34/41 in Caracas. Reservations at our Lima hotel (approx. US\$15 per night) before Day 1 may be made through Encounter, payment by you directly to hotel on arrival.

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Restaurant/cantina meals (3 meals a day) except on Inca Trail, Iquitos River project, Mt Roraima Trek & Canaima River Expedition - where camp cooked meals are prepared by local staff (vegetables, fruit, fish & poultry, eggs, bread, cereals, preserves, local canned & dried goods). Meals in major centres - Lima, Cuzco (Inca Trail Extension only), Manaus & Caracas: Days spent in these cities cannot easily revolve around group meals so meals here are at your own expense. We suggest you allow US\$15 per day in these cities, or a total of US\$75.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the project, and which contains not less than 6 blank pages. Visa requirements and costs vary according to your nationality, and even then are subject to change. Any visas you may require should be obtained before your departure to South America.

Encounter or your agent can advise you of up to date visa requirements applicable to you, and their costs. We can also help you in obtaining them.

INSURANCE

You must have personal Travel Insurance to cover Adventure Travel and it must cover all the aspects described on p60 of the brochure. Please bring a copy of your policy with you to the pre-departure meeting. If your policy does not cover this minimum level then Encounter will not accept responsibility for the consequences.

MEDICAL & VACCINATIONS

All vaccination requirements and medical recommendations are detailed in the pre-departure information pack at the time of booking.

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

You should allow approximately US\$120 per week to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, laundry, souvenirs, optional activities, some individual museum entry fees etc. Interesting collectibles and ethnic crafts can be tempting in South America and their costs are usually very reasonable. (Wood & bark carvings, hammocks, fabrics & Indian handicrafts, beads, gold, gems & jewellery). Apart from the above, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money in South America.

ARRIVING AT START OF THE PROJECT

If you are doing the Inca Trail extension, there will be a brief, informal meeting at our Lima hotel at 18.00 hrs on the evening before Day 1. This is your latest arrival time.

For the 34 Day itinerary there will be a pre-departure meeting at our Lima hotel at 18.00 hrs on the evening before Day 1.

Ideally we suggest that you arrive in Lima at least the day before Day 1 to allow yourself time to rest & acclimatise after your intercontinental flights. There is plenty to see & do if you are arriving earlier: Plaza de Armas & museums, Miraflores markets & shops, theatres & concerts, bullfights, football matches in the National Stadium.

LEAVING AT END OF PROJECT

Arrangements end in Caracas on the morning of Day 34/41. Any flight out of Caracas could be taken on Day 34/41.

COMBINATIONS & CONNECTING PROJECTS

'Trans Amazon to the Lost World' is neither part of, nor a section of, any other Encounter project.

INTERESTING READING

The Rivers Amazon (Alex Shoumatoff), The Drunken Forest (Gerald Durrell), The Lost World (Arthur Conan Doyle). For the Inca Trail Extension – Exploring Cuzco (Peter Frost) and The Lost City of the Incas (Hiram Bingham). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Local Payment

Return flights.....

Visas.....

Vaccinations.....

Insurance.....

Personal Spending Money.....

Total _____

The information in this dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Encounter Overland Ltd.