

# M/V Aqua

Amazon River Expedition Cruise – 7 Nights  
June-November (Low Water) Itinerary

## Day 1

Saturday

IQUITOS/AMAZON RIVER

### 5:00 p.m. Arrival

Your guides await you, as your flight from Lima glides in for landing at Iquitos International Airport. After you've claimed your luggage, you will board an air-conditioned bus and transfer to Iquitos' main wharf. There the M/V Aqua lies at anchor, awaiting your arrival.

As you settle into your over-sized suite, your vessel will start on its journey toward the Yanayacu River, deep in the heart of Amazonia. Over the next seven days, you will also sail along the two largest tributaries of the Amazon, the Ucayali and the Marañón, as well as on the mighty Amazon itself. You are embarking on a spectacular adventure, to a place visited by only a few of even the most experienced world travelers.

### 8:00 p.m. Safety Drill and Briefing on the Top Deck

Before dinner, we will perform a routine safety drill. Following that, your Cruise Director and Guides will give a brief orientation talk about life on board, where you will go and what you will see on your Amazon journey.

### 8:30 p.m. Welcome Dinner

Peruvian cuisine is considered one of the world's best. Here it is presented with a touch of European flair, and a vegetarian dish is always available. Raise a glass of fine South American wine to toast the beginning of a beautiful journey, then look out the window and watch the river go by as you experience your first wonderful meal aboard the M/V Aqua.

Perhaps enjoy a nightcap under the stars before retiring.

## Day 2

Sunday

AMAZON/TAHUAYO/RIVERS AND CHARO LAKE

### 6:30 a.m. Breakfast

Be up early to catch the sun on the river. Our sumptuous daily breakfast buffet features a broad choice of traditional breakfast egg dishes, plus Peruvian specialties and fresh-squeezed fruit juices.

**7:30 a.m. Tahuayo River Exploration and Fishing Trip at Charo Lake** This morning you will board our

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comfortable excursion skiffs for your first adventure, traveling from the Amazon through the Huaysi short-cut canal to explore the Tahuayo black water river. Life jackets, ponchos, rubber boots and plenty of cold potable water will always be available for you on board the skiffs. As we float down the Tahuayo, occasional fishermen paddling in their dug-out canoes will give us a cheerful greeting. Keep your binoculars ready to spot a vast variety of wildlife: terns, orioles, blackbirds, black collared hawks, monkeys, and sloth share this wonderful environment with us. Upon arrival at Charo Lake, you can bait your hooks to try to catch one of Amazonia's fearsome piranhas (and other fish as well). As you fish, trained naturalist guides will also tell you the story of the lake and its inhabitants.

**11:00 a.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua

Icy cold towels await you, as you transfer from your skiffs into the M/V Aqua. As the vessel continues up the Amazon River, you have some time to relax, or perhaps even take a nap, before lunch.

**1:00 p.m.** Lunch

Enjoy lighter mid-day fare in our air-conditioned dining room.

**4:00 p.m.** Yacapana Islands Exploration and Dolphin Sighting Locals call the Yacapana Islands the "Iguana Islands," because of the huge population of these reptiles—like tiny dinosaurs—crawling over the ground and resting in the tree tops. Amazon folklore says that if you touch an iguana, you will develop some of their traits; nobody wants to be ugly, so the iguanas are well protected. We will pass by in the skiff, giving you a chance to snap good photos. As the sun sets, you will have the chance to see and photograph both gray and pink freshwater dolphins. The people of the Amazon believe that these dolphins turn into humans to steal handsome men or pretty women from their villages during celebrations.

**6:30 p.m.** To the Headwaters

We will return to the M/V Aqua vessel and continue our journey upstream, toward the headwaters of the Amazon River, where the Ucayali, Marañón, and the Amazon Rivers merge.

Perhaps sip a pre-dinner pisco sour on the Upper Deck, while you watch the sun set.

**8:00 p.m.** Dinner

Day 3

Monday

MARAÑÓN RIVER/PACAYA-SAMIRIA NATIONAL RESERVE (NAUTA CAÑO AND YANAYACU-PUCATE)

**6:30 a.m.** Breakfast

Today you can choose between two options:

**Option 1:** Full-Day Excursion with a Picnic Lunch at Ranger Station No. 2

**7:30 a.m.** Full-Day Excursion at Ranger Station No. 2

Travel by skiff from Yanayacu Creek all the way to remote Chingana, a small creek where giant river otter usually nest. These handsome animals were killed in great numbers for their pelts, and are now

threatened with extinction. On this excursion, you will also see howler and capuchin monkeys, the squirrel-sized monkeys called tamarins, pink and gray river dolphins, and a vast variety of birds. We will also take you deep into the jungle, where you will encounter wildlife and learn first-hand about the important medical value of jungle plants. And we will show you famous Kapok Trees (ceiba pentandra), the tallest trees in the Amazon Basin. Enjoy a generous picnic lunch at the park Ranger Station No. 2, before we begin our journey back to our vessel.

**4:00 p.m.** Arrive at the M/V Aqua.

**Option 2:** Guided Jungle Walk/Siesta/Monkey and Dolphin Expedition.

**8:30 a.m.** Guided Jungle Walk at Ranger Station No. 1

This morning your Park Ranger will tell you all about sustainable resource management projects in Amazonia. You will visit one of the projects, where villagers are planting palms to obtain oil. The ranger may also show you the artificial nests created on the sand to protect turtle eggs.

**11:00 a.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua

**12:30 p.m.** Lunch, followed by a Siesta

**4:00 p.m.** Monkey and Dolphin Expedition

On this late afternoon expedition, you are likely to see the two different kinds of freshwater dolphins—including the unusual pink ones—found in the Amazon. Later, keep your eyes directed toward the jungle canopy, where you can spot at least several kinds of primates—among the 13 species of monkeys resident in the National Park. Perhaps you will catch a glimpse of tamarins and howlers, dusky titi monkeys and pigmy marmoset monkeys. Watch for alligators, and keep your binoculars at the ready, as you are likely to see more than 200 species of birds.

**6:00 p.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua.

**7:30 p.m.** Dinner

**8.30 p.m.** Optional Night Excursion

This evening we will take the skiffs out in search of caimans, tree boas, tarantulas, and frogs. After this night adventure, the M/V Aqua will start sailing downstream on the Marañón River, toward the headwaters of the Amazon.

Day 4

Tuesday

BIRTHPLACE OF THE AMAZON/PUERTO MIGUEL VILLAGE AND MARAYALI RIVER

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**5:30 a.m.** Birthplace of the Amazon

This morning, the M/V Aqua skirts the edges of the vast Pacaya-Samiria Reserve, a flooded forest covering five million acres at the headwaters of the Amazon basin. Rise early and be on your skiffs at 5:30 a.m. to

view one of the great spectacles of the Southern Hemisphere: the sun rising over the birthplace of the Amazon River. Here—where the union of two major tributaries, the Ucayali and the Marañón, form the world’s greatest waterway—nature is at its most dramatic. Your dawn excursion will be accompanied by abundant bird song, as you glide in small boats past river banks populated by large-billed terns, laughing falcons, gray tanagers, sandpipers, five kinds of parakeets, the exotic short-tailed parrot, and dozens of other birds.

**7:30 a.m.** Breakfast

**8:30 a.m.** Puerto Miguel Village

We will travel by skiff to Puerto Miguel native village, where you can meet and interact with local villagers from this most remote part of the world, and can learn a bit more about their culture, traditions, and folklore. You will also have the chance to trade items for local handicrafts.

**11:00 a.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua

**12:30 p.m.** Lunch

Share a last lunch with your fellow passengers who have taken the three-night journey.

**4:00 p.m.** Ucayali River and Yucurucho Lake

This afternoon we will travel by skiff along the Ucayali river to Yucurucho Lake, where will walk a little ways into the jungle to see the world’s largest aquatic plant, the giant water lilies or “Victoria Regias”. You will be one of a very small number of people who have ever seen these plants bloom at night.

**7:00 p.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua

**8:30 p.m.** Dinner

Meet new friends—those taking the four-night journey—over dinner.

Day 5

Wednesday

UCAYALI RIVER/YANALLPA AREA

**7:00 a.m.** Breakfast

**8:00 a.m.** Jungle Walk to Yanallpa Lake

This morning we will go in search of the bizarre-looking birds called “hoatzins”, which live in huge colonies in a very strange Jurassic Park-like lake. As we hike, your guides will teach you orientation techniques used in the deep jungle.

**11:00 a.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua

**12:30 p.m.** Lunch

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**4:00 p.m.** Ucayali Exploration and Discovery Tour

This afternoon we will cruise the majestic Ucayali River, giving you a chance to see and meet native balseros, or fishermen, who will demonstrate their skill and let you see their catch—including a type of “armored” catfish with a shell-like skin—which they are taking to the market in the small village of Requena. We will also find a “banana balsero” raft, loaded with hundreds of clusters of bananas, drifting down the river to market.

**6:00 p.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua**7:30 p.m.** Dinner**8:30 p.m.** Night Trip at Sapote River

Your guides will show you several types of caiman, members of the alligator family, along the fish-rich Sapote River. Chances are good that we will surprise other night-dwelling creatures as well.

**10:00 p.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua to sail upstream on the Puinahua River

## Day 6

## Thursday

## PUINAHUA RIVER/HATUM POSA LAKE AND PACAYA RIVER

**7:30 a.m.** Breakfast**8:30 a.m.** Jungle Walk Near Hatum Posa Village

On this walk, your guides will introduce you to native people doing subsistence farming, and will tell you how they learned to cultivate wild plants and trees to earn farm income. Deep in the primary forest, your guides will also show you the wealth of fruit trees and medicinal plants hidden in the jungle.

**11:00 a.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua**12:30 p.m.** Lunch

**4:00 p.m.** Pacaya River Exploration, Plus Night Trip from Ranger Station No. 1 to Yanayacu Lake In the late afternoon, we will take our skiffs along the Pacaya River, journeying from Ranger Station No. 1 toward Yanayacu Lake, where you can view the abundant life that is hidden in the deep rainforest. You may see saki monkeys, capuchin monkeys, and the easy-to-spot heavy howler monkeys. As the sun sets, you will hear the loud, ferocious sounding warning signals made by howler monkeys marking their territories.

When night falls, you will hear the second movement of the Amazon rainforest symphony, as other nocturnal animals send their shrill calls across the tree tops. We will use our special spotlight torches to locate night creatures, including, perhaps, huge caimans. 7:30 p.m. Return to the M/V Aqua.

Tonight the vessel will be docked by the No. 1 Ranger Station in Pacaya Samiria National Park.

**8:00 p.m.** Dinner

Day 7

Friday

PUINAHUA/PACAYA RIVERS AND CAROCURAHUAYTE LAKE

**6:30 a.m.** Pacaya Exploration; Breakfast on the Skiffs In the bright morning light, your guides will show you parrots, macaws, toucans, and many different types of monkeys. We will also go to the dolphin feeding spots along Yanayacu Lake, where you will be delightfully surrounded by these creatures while enjoying a light breakfast and fresh juice.

**11:00 a.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua  
We will begin our homeward journey, sailing toward Iquitos.

**12:30 p.m.** Lunch

**3:30 p.m.** Sapote River Fishing Trip  
Armed with poles and bait, we will take you to a special place on this fish-rich river, where you will catch some of the more than 3,000 species of tropical fish that live in the Amazon Basin. The key target will be piranhas, the small carnivorous fish with a fearsome reputation—considered a good food source by the locals.

**6:30 p.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua  
We will sail downstream all night, as we make our way to Iquitos, and your onward flight.

**8:00 p.m.** Farewell Dinner  
Just minutes after being in the wilderness, surrounded by monkeys and birds, and the other wildlife of the rainforest, you will find yourself sitting down to a final gourmet feast in the ship's dining room

**9:00 p.m.** Crew Presentation  
Tonight, the guides will introduce some of the crew members you haven't yet met on the trip, but who have worked behind the scenes to give you an unforgettable experience.

Day 8

Saturday

ARRIVE IN IQUITOS CITY/CHECK-OUT AND DISEMBARK AT THE MAIN WHARF/CITY TOUR AND TRANSFER TO THE AIRPORT

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**7:30 a.m.** Breakfast

**8:30 a.m.** Last Skiff Trip (optional)

A brief skiff trip along the majestic Amazon will give you a last chance to photograph the wildlife of the

jungle.

**10:00 a.m.** Return to the M/V Aqua

You have time to pack and prepare for the next stage of your journey.

**12:00 p.m.** Light Lunch

Please leave your packed luggage in your cabins, to be transferred to the bus, before coming to the dining room for a light lunch.

**12:40 p.m.** Disembarkation/City Tour and Transfer to the Airport Your afternoon in the remote city of Iquitos, accessible only by river or air, will not disappoint. This bustling town, complete with a house built by Gustave Eiffel, was once a rich center of the rubber industry. After a city tour, we will make a stop at San Juan Amazonian Indians' Market for some last-minute shopping. 4:00 p.m. Arrive at Iquitos International Airport, where your guides will help you check-in and will wait with you until you flight departs.

**5:30 p.m.** Flight Departs for Lima

**Note:** All itineraries are subject to change, due to weather and other conditions. All times indicated are approximate, and are also subject to change.

