

Yavero River Expedition Itinerary

Flowing from the Andes to the Amazon, Earth River's newest discovery, Peru's Rio Yavero, pulses through a breath-taking 8,000 foot deep jungle canyon laced with thrilling rapids, magical tributary waterfalls, wild creatures and wondrous colored birds and butterflies. Visits to Cusco and its vast Inca ruins, inflatable kayaking and rafting through a spectacular and biologically diverse cloud forest canyon, a visit and stay at the Machiguenga native Amazon Lodge at Timpia and a river hike to a clay wall covered in hundreds of brightly colored Macaws, compliment this extraordinary Peruvian adventure. Dove tailing perfectly into an already thrilling itinerary are two of South America's grandest marvels, the Pongo Mainique and Machu Picchu. Only a handful of people have ever made this extraordinary journey which will take you from the silent, white crown of the Andes to the and green tapestry and raucous symphony of the Amazon. From gigantic cactus to palm tree size ferns. From a blizzard of white butterflies to a rainbow colored wall of Macaws. From the world's largest otters to monkeys that will fit on your finger. Down a river trail that leads to the lost Inca City of Gold to the soaring ruins of Machu Picchu. In terms of biological diversity, unique history, native culture, wonderful weather, spectacular scenery and world-class whitewater, this Peruvian journey, stands alone in the world of river based adventure travel.

DAY 1: U.S. / LIMA

Fly from the U.S. to Lima.

NOTE: There are a number of options for joining the Earth River Yavero River Expedition.

Option #1(leaving Thursday Evening): Fly in the evening from U.S. to Lima. Arrive in Lima the following morning and transfer to flight to Cuzco. Spend night in Hotel in Cuzco or transfer by taxi (one hour, \$20) to Calca and spend night in Hotel. Or fly from U.S. overnight arriving in Lima on Saturday morning.

Note: Cuzco is at a very high altitude and it may be difficult to sleep there if you're not acclimatized.

Option # 2 (leaving Friday during the day): Fly from the U.S. to Lima during the day. Arrive in Lima in the early evening. Spend night at Hotel in Lima. Catch early flight to Cuzco the following morning and take taxi to Calca.

Option #3: (Leaving Friday Evening): Fly from the U.S to Lima in the evening. Arrive in Lima early in the morning. Transfer to the early flight to Cuzco. Arrive in Cuzco and take one hour taxi to Calca.

DAY 2: / CUSCO / CALCA / YAVERO CANYON (CAMPING)

This morning we take an early flight to Cuzco (unless you arrive the day before). We arrive in Cuzco and take a taxi (on our own) from the Airport to Calca (1 hour. Approx. \$20 per taxi). Calca is a small town that sits at 9,600 feet. Upon meeting the Earth River guide in Calca we drive 2 hours through beautiful mountain scenery and past roaring rivers to the wonderful town of Lares where we stop for lunch. Much of the population in Lares dresses in brightly colored native clothing and the town has a festival feel to it. It also produces woven goods that are sold to tourists throughout Peru. In the afternoon we drive two and a half hours to our camping spot near the Yavero Canyon.

NOTE: If you arrive the night before, you can spend the night in Calca at the Casa de Mama Gloria bed and breakfast (rrociral@casagloria.com). Calca is over 2,000 feet lower in elevation than Cuzco making acclimatizing and sleeping much easier than it is in Cuzco. You can also spend the night in Cuzco and take a taxi to Calca the following (Saturday) morning.

DAY 3: YAVERO TRAILHEAD / YAVERO RIVER

This morning we switch from the bus to four wheel drive vehicles. Cresting the top of the Yavero Canyon we get our first glimpse of the thin green and white ribbon of water 8,000 feet below. Beyond the lush Yavero Canyon, densely foliated mountains unfold as far as the eye can see as they penetrate into Manu National Park. On no more than a windy, overgrown cart trail, we descend 4,500 feet to the trailhead where we meet the pack horses. Here we begin our 2,000 foot, two hour hike, down to the put in on a trail that once led to the Lost Inca City of Gold. This historic path was used when the Incas fled into the jungle to escape the Spaniards and signs of their influence from burial grounds to stone walls are visible along the way. Just above our starting point, the trail crosses a narrow wooden suspension bridge over a dramatic gorge. After a safety talk, we board the rafts and continue down river running a series of moderately challenging class 3 - 4 rapids.

DAYS 3 - 6: YAVERO CANYON (RAFTING, KAYAKING / HIKING)

For the next four days we will paddle raft and inflatable kayak hundreds of thrilling rapids through a gorgeous 8,000 foot deep jungle canyon with hanging waterfalls, Macaws, monkeys, giant Otters and countless birds and butterflies. The whitewater is similar in difficulty to the Pacuare in Costa Rica only there is ten times more of it. The Yavero's most impressive rapid, Tobogan, is one of the longest commercially run class IV rapids in the world. Here the river narrows and heads through a series of crashing waves and sweeping bends for over two miles. In places, the hurtling rafts literally climb the walls like a bob sled, giving one the feeling of being in a giant water park. When the rapids change from class 4 to 3 we will switch from rafts to inflatable kayaks and after a kayak lesson, paddle the teal colored, swimming pool temperature water through some of the best class 2 -3 beginner kayaking in the world. From the boats we will see giant otters playing in the eddies and multi-colored Macaws soaring through the old growth jungle canopy that overhangs the river. The canyon's eastern boundary is the four million acre Manu National Park. With over 15,000 different flowering plants, 1,000 species of birds, 200 different mammals including 13 different kinds of primates and hundreds of butterflies species, the Manu Biosphere Reserve is considered to be the most diverse region of the Amazon Rain Forest. There will also be the opportunity to visit with the Machiguenga Indigenous community that lives along the river and see first hand how they carve massive trees into dugout canoes in order to transport their crops down river. It is rare to find a river with few bugs, swimming pool temperature water, days in the low eighties and nights in the sixties.

DAY 6: YAVERO CANYON / URUBAMBA RIVER / PONGO DE MAINIQUE / MACHIGUENGA NATIVE LODGE

This morning we kayak the Yavero's final class 3 rapids and reach the confluence with the much larger Urubamba. Here we have the option of switching back to the rafts, or for the more intrepid, continuing in the kayaks downstream through the Urubamba's big exciting beginner wave train rapids. After running five exhilarating rapids with waves as high as 12 feet, the canyon walls begin closing and upon rounding a swift bend we pass between stone gates and enter the mysterious Pongo Mainique. This 3 kilometer, 3,000 foot deep, sheer walled canyon divides the upland cloud forest with the Amazon Jungle. Here the mighty Urubamba takes a final plunge through one last mountain range before entering the flat Amazon basin. This canyon is an important spiritual place for the Machiguenga native people who believe that the souls of their dead reside in the Pongo. In 2001 the Wildlife Conservation Society did a survey of the Pongo and

the immediate area around it and said, “The lowland rain forests and mid-mountain cloud forests within a radius of five miles of the Pongo Mainique possibly comprise the single most biologically diverse site on the face of the earth. “ Beyond its cultural and biological significance, the Pongo Mainique is one of the most enchanted places in South America. Upon entering the Pongo, we paddle past smooth, water scalloped walls, covered in iridescent, emerald moss with delicate seeps of water collecting into dozens of tiny waterfalls. Around the first bend, the symphony of water grows as dozens of impressive waterfalls cascade into the river from as high as 100 feet. In heart of the Pongo, over a dozen significant waterfalls can be viewed at once. The chorus of water grows deafening as we run an exciting class 4 rapid framed within this cathedral of falling water. Then suddenly we round a bend and the canyon walls give way to the open plane of the Amazon basin. Here we are met by a large, motorized wooden dugout canoe that transports us one hour down river to the Machiguenga Center for Tropical Studies. The center is situated in 400,000 protected acres of cloud and rain forest within the Machiguenga Megantoni National Indigenous Sanctuary. The lodge is owned and run by the Machiguenga Indians of Timpia, a community of 800 people. It is the only 100% indigenous-owned rainforest lodge in the Amazon. The community has banned all hunting and capture of Macaws and other parrots on their lands which are 99.4 percent forested. This sanctuary is home to a number of varieties of monkeys, 5 species of Macaws, Spectacled Bears, Andean Cocks-of-the-Rock and Jaguars among other animals. In the evening we dine on native food, cooked by our local hosts and sleep in comfortable rooms under grass thatched roofs.

DAY 7: MACHIGUENGA NATIVE CENTER / SABETI MACAW CLAY LICK / URUBAMBA RIVER

At daybreak we take a one hour hike to the Sabeti clay lick. This daily Parrot Serengetti is one of only seven Macaw licks open to visitation in the Amazon. Most of the Amazon clay licks are on rivers. The Sabeti site is unique because you are able to photograph from dry land rather than a rocking canoe or motor sound to scare the macaws. Researchers believe Macaws eat the clay to cleanse themselves from the toxins in some of the seeds in their diet. Led by our Machiguenga guide, the narrow trail winds through a dense jungle canopy filled with monkeys and exotic noises. After an hour, we come to a clearing and are greeted by a wonderful wildlife spectacle, a 250 foot greyish-pink wall blanketed in hundreds of Macaws and smaller parrots. Because hunting and trapping have been banned in the reserve, the emboldened birds allow us to creep within 45 feet of the dazzling mosaic of swarming colors and sound. We return back to the center at mid

morning and board the dugout canoe for a relaxing, scenic 5 hour ride up the Urubamba where we camp on a large expanse of sand. The boat ride gives us one last look at the Pongo and the Yavero confluence as the driver skillfully negotiates the Urubamba's rapids in reverse.

DAY 8: QUILLABAMBA / SANTA TERESA

This morning take the dugout an hour to the small river port town of Kitinie where we board a bus for the 3 and 1/2 hour ride through verdant jungle, to the city of Quillabamba. The rest of the morning is free to explore this bustling city on the edge of the jungle with its myriad of shops. After lunch we board the bus which takes over a high windy pass with views of the snow-capped Andes to the town of Santa Maria where we spend the night in a hotel.

DAY 9: SANTA TERESA / MACHU PICCHU / AGUAS CALIENTAS

Today we drive along the Urubamba River and over a high mountain pass with dramatic views of the snow-capped Andes to a trailhead at Hydro-Elctrica. From here we walk two spectacular miles along the Urubamba River with soaring cliffs rising two thousand feet over us. We reach the town of Aguas Calientes in the middle of the afternoon and hop on the next bus leaving for Machu Picchu. Surrounded by formidable peaks this ancient mountain-top Inca City stands sentinel over the Urubamba Valley 2,000 feet below. This is an extraordinary time to visit this wonder of the world because the crowds have left. Dominating the site are massive stone walls, buildings and courtyards interconnected by stone steps and access doors. Some of the carved stone blocks that make up the walls weigh 150,000 pounds and are 18 feet high. How this Herculean union of stones was assembled without the use of cement is a mystery. Instead of moving with a throngs of tourists, we are able to discover this architectural masterpiece of man and nature in the solitude of our own thoughts. It is even possible to take sweeping photographs and video of the complex without anyone else in them. We watch the sun set over the imposing mountains and take the bus back down to Aquas Calientes where we have a farewell dinner and spend the night at a hotel.

DAY 10: AGUAS CALIENTAS / CUZCO / LIMA / UNITED STATES

This morning we board the 3 hour narrow gauge train to Cusco. Upon arriving in Cusco we transfer (on our own by taxi) to the airport and board our flights to Lima

and then on to the United States. (If you are on an evening flight to the U.S. you will actually arrive on day 11)

Note: The Earth River portion of the trip is over when you reach Cuzco. Those people flying right out, will need to take a taxi (on their own) and head out to the airport. If you have some extra time before your flight you can visit Cuzco on your own.