

Educator & Naturalist Packing Checklist, Tips, & Notes

Additional notes for Machu Picchu in italics



Amazon Rainforest Workshops 

Packing Checklist

Packing Tips

Clothing

- Sturdy sneakers or lightweight hiking boots
- Teva or Keen-type sandals for the lodge
- 3-4 pairs of socks, lightweight / quickdry
- 2-3 pairs of long lightweight pants
- 3-4 pairs of shorts
- 5-6 T-shirts or short sleeve shirts
- 2-3 long sleeve lightweight shirts
- Swimsuit
- Lightweight nylon windbreaker or jacket
- Rain gear or poncho
- Sun hat
- Underwear
- Pajamas or sleepwear
- Set of clean clothes to wear home
- *Long sleeved shirts and fleece sweater for Machu Picchu*

- 👍 Consider bringing a pair of hiking shoes and a pair of old sneakers so that you have at least one dry pair of shoes.
- 👍 Lightweight or zip off nylon pants are recommended. Cotton gets wet and heavy and doesn't dry in the humid tropics.
- 👍 Ponchos work well in the Amazon, covering you and your backpack during a rainstorm.
- 👍 Consider packing old clothes that you don't mind getting dirty, muddy, or covered with paint.
- 👍 Upon departure, you may want to leave articles of clothing to be given to local people. Think of what you might want to "hand-me-down" when you pack.
- 👍 Pack a full set of clothes in CARRY ON luggage

Toiletries

- Comb/brush
- Shampoo/bath soap
- Washcloth
- Sunscreen 30+ (waterproof)
- Insect repellent
- After-bite stick
- Deodorant
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Hand sanitizer (small bottle)
- Personal hygiene items
- Personal first aid kit and a supply of electrolytes
- Prescription medications in CARRY ON Luggage
- *Altitude medication if needed for Machu Picchu*

- 👍 If you have a tendency to get motion sickness, you may want to bring motion sickness medicine for boat rides.
- 👍 If you generally have allergic reactions to mosquito or bug bites, you may want to bring antihistamines.
- 👍 A personal first aid kit with a small supply of Imodium, aspirin/ibuprofen, band aids, antibacterial cream, etc. is a good idea. Electrolyte tablets, such as NUUN, are a smart thing to bring to help you avoid dehydration.
- 👍 Be sure to pack ALL PRESCRIPTION medications in your CARRY ON LUGGAGE!!!

Other Items

- Water bottle
- Flashlight and/or headlamp with extra batteries
- Camera (charger, extra batteries)
- Binoculars
- Sunglasses
- Alarm clock (watch is fine)
- Journal, pen & pencil
- Large ziplock bags for wet clothes and shoes
- Small ziplock bags with desiccant packs for electronics
- Money (\$200 in smaller US dollar bills plus credit card)
- Work gloves to wear during service project day
- Daypack or backpack to bring on daily hikes
- Required workshop resources/handbooks
- Ear plugs
- A few healthy snacks (individually wrapped)
- *Extra spending money and a credit or debit card with PIN for ATM and/or currency exchange in Machu Picchu*
- *A lock for your luggage if you store a bag in Cusco*
- *Plug adaptor for charging electronics in Machu Picchu*

- 👍 Your water bottle is your best friend in the tropics. Be sure to bring a sturdy bottle with a screw top lid. Pop up tops get dirty and are harder to clean.
- 👍 Bring binoculars!! You will need them to see birds, sloths, monkeys, and other wildlife in the Amazon.
- 👍 Cameras are sensitive to the humidity of the tropics. Bring zip lock bags with desiccant packs (similar to those in shoe boxes) to dry your camera out overnight.
- 👍 Use a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on luggage. This will double as a trail pack in the Amazon.
- 👍 Be prepared to haul your own luggage and pack as lightly as possible.

Important Packing Notes

Luggage Considerations

- When packing, less is more! Bear in mind that you will also need to carry or pull your own luggage for a short distance in the airport. Please limit yourself to one checked bag (soft-sided bag like a duffel bag works well), plus your carry-on. Most U.S.-based international carriers restrict passengers to one checked bag (max. weight per bag is 50 lbs; no boxes) and one carry-on (max. is 25 lbs), plus a small personal bag (purse, waist pack).
- Pack one or two full changes of clothes in your **carry-on luggage** that you take on the plane, along with **irreplaceable items**, e.g. medicines as well as your camera, binoculars, vital documents, essential toiletries, luggage keys, journal, cell phone, and any small electronics. Make sure that you hand-carry anything of significant value with you on the plane. The TSA website (www.tsa.gov) provides up-to-date information about the correct way to transport liquids, gels, and aerosols. Check the latest airline security rules about using locks on luggage, as these rules are also subject to change.
- Humidity is the rule! Pack things that absorb (or are sensitive to) moisture in ziploc bags. This includes items such as notepads and papers, cameras, batteries, medicines or vitamins, and clothing to keep them fresh. Actually, packing nearly everything in ziploc bags is a good way to help you keep organized.
- Take time to pack to keep organized during the trip. Although our transfers are very efficient, we move to 4 different lodges during the program. Make sure that all of your bags are labeled with your name, address, and telephone number.

Toiletries

- Soap & toiletries with NO scent (some fragrances attract insects).
- Feminine hygiene items are not easily available while traveling, plan accordingly.
- Washcloth (towels and bed linens are provided at the lodges).

Health Items

- Any prescription drugs or vitamins you regularly use should be clearly labeled to avoid issues passing through customs.
- Strong insect repellent and insect bite cream (if you'd typically use this). While insects are probably no worse than many areas in the U.S., it is wise to keep yourself well covered with lightweight clothing and/or repellent on walks in the rainforest. (If using repellent with high concentration of deet, be conscious of washing deet off of your skin at bedtime.)
- Sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher is best), sunburn cream, chap stick with sunscreen protection. Equatorial sun is strong! You will definitely need sunscreen in the open boats and during the village service day.
- Electrolytes: We recommend participants bring their own supply of electrolytes. Products such as NUUN tablets or SOS powder packs dissolve easily in your water bottle and have a pleasant taste. Water is the best defense against dehydration, but a boost of electrolytes can be helpful.
- Dramamine or other meds if you are prone to motion sickness.
- Nutritious snacks. The food at the lodges is delicious, but you may want to bring a few snacks to cover airport layovers or in-between times. Snacks should be in single serve packaging. Avoid candies and other items that will melt in the heat or dissolve in the humidity.

Miscellaneous

- Bring a flashlight with a bright beam and extra batteries (alkaline type batteries are recommended). You will enjoy night hikes and boat trips in search of insects, frogs, toads, and other nocturnal animals much more if you do! Although walkways are lit with oil lamps in the Amazon, if you get up in the middle of the night or search your luggage after dark you will need your flashlight. The new LED flashlights are affordable and have bright beams, but they can use up batteries quickly so bring extras.
- Binoculars. To get the most out of wildlife watching and birding, bring a good pair of binoculars. A good web site to consult is <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/gear/binoculars/>
- Journal. We will pre-print special journals for participants and distribute them prior to departure. If you are an avid journaler and/or artist, you may want to bring an additional journal or sketch pad.
- Several large and small plastic bags for your dirty clothes, for workshop activities, to stow artifacts, and to carry away trash. Even though you will see wastebaskets in your rooms in the Amazon, plan on bringing a gallon-size ziploc bag to pack gum/candy wrappers, tissues, etc., which accumulate during the week. Pack it in and pack it out as best you can. Step lightly in

this environment to help reduce the consumption of resources, and thus the impact on this area. Packing out your garbage is most important to help alleviate the Amazon's trash disposal problem.

Other Important Info . . .

Accommodations

Field sessions take place at: 1) Explorama Lodge; 2) ExplorNapo Lodge; 3) the Amazon Conservatory of Tropical Studies (ACTS) Lodge; and 4) Ceiba Tops Resort. Nestled in the lush rainforest, the first three lodges are rustic, thatch-roofed, comfortable, clean, and spacious. Each lodge houses private rooms equipped simply with a wash basin, mirror, shelves, and two beds covered with mosquito netting. Towels and bed linens are provided. The kitchen, dining area, showers, latrines, and sleeping quarters are all connected by picturesque thatch-covered walkways. Ceiba Tops Resort is the only luxury lodge on the Amazon River, having well-appointed rooms with hot water and air conditioning. The bathrooms at Explorama and Ceiba Tops are en suite with flush toilets and cold showers. At Napo and the ACTS Field station the bathrooms (latrine toilets) and showers are in separate buildings adjacent to the rooms and are cleaned daily, and inspected. The shower water is gravity fed, using pumped, filtered water from Amazon tributaries.

Trails and Property

Always remember that you are in the heart of the Amazon rainforest and nature doesn't always respect boundaries! It is a strict Explorama policy that guests do not go on any of the trails unless accompanied by a guide or employee. It is easy to get lost and potentially dangerous and we must ask that you comply.

Water ~ Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate!

Do not drink or swallow the tap water in the hotels, airports or any other facility. In the Amazon, shower water and water in the pitcher below the basin in your room are for washing and NOT for drinking. This water is from the river and is only filtered, not purified. Plenty of purified water is available for brushing your teeth and drinking at all the lodge facilities in the Amazon.

Electricity

Electricity in the Amazon is provided by generators and not all lodges have electric lights in the rooms or in common areas. At ExplorNapo Lodge and ACTS, individual rooms and covered walkways are lit by kerosene lights at night. Explorama and Ceiba Tops have electricity in the rooms. You will be able to charge your electronics at each lodge. Charging stations in the common area are run by generators. You probably won't need a voltage converter for your battery charger as most are dual voltage and adjust automatically (check the specs on your charger or electric device – it should say "input voltage, 100v-240v").

WiFi

WiFi is available at all locations with the exception of ACTS, but it is "jungle" wifi. It can be spotty, slow, and sometimes out for several hours/days. Uploading photos and posting blogs is nearly impossible. Plan on limited communication with the US and let friends and family know that "no news is good news" and that you will tell them all about it when you return.

Personal Communications

Note the "emergency contact and address" sheet provided in your departure email for your family to reach you in the event of an emergency at home. In the Amazon, you will be able to make a phone call to the States, only at Ceiba Tops Resort. We rely on radio communications in the event of an emergency in the Amazon. Sorry, no phones in the Amazon lodges for traveler's general outbound personal calling. Emergency communications from the U.S. to Peru will be handled by EcoTeach. Outbound communications from Peru will be handled by Explorama Tours.

Health

While no immunizations are currently required to enter Peru, neither EcoTeach nor Amazon Rainforest Workshops are qualified to make medical recommendations. It is important to consult with your public health center, physician, or travel clinic for the most up-to-date information. The CDC website www.cdc.gov has excellent information.

Time

In January and February, Peru is on Eastern Standard Time, same as our U.S. East Coast time. Because Peru does not adjust its time for Daylight Savings, during our spring and summer programs Peru is on our Central Standard Time. When it is 9 a.m. on our East Coast (6 a.m. West Coast) it is 8 a.m. in Peru.

Climate and Weather

Temperatures in the Amazon have little variation between winter and summer. Days are usually in the upper 80s and nights go down to the lower 70s. Very close to the equator, the Iquitos area experiences strong sun and high humidity. Heavy, though brief, rains often occur in late afternoon. Explorama's lodges are all surrounded by jungle and afford the shade of foliage.

Money & Shopping

US dollars will do fine in the Amazon. \$200 (plus a VISA or MasterCard) is usually more than sufficient for adult travelers. You can purchase Amazonian artifacts at Explorama's lodges and in the airports. Bring small denomination bills (\$1, \$5 for sodas, etc.) as well as \$20 bills. Bring the newest-looking bills that you can find without marks (torn or damaged bills are not accepted at Peruvian banks, making them worthless to vendors). Participants comment that cash, if carefully placed in more than one location, is more convenient than traveler's checks. **Be sure to notify your credit card company of your dates of travel.** Traveler's checks and credit cards (VISA and MC) are accepted at Explorama Lodge and ExplorNapó.

Laundry

There is no formal laundry service in the Amazon. If there are items that you feel you must hand wash, be sure that they are made of a fabric that dries very quickly.

Machu Picchu Extension

- **Airline Tickets:** *On arrival in Lima from Iquitos, we'll advise you of your Lima/Cusco/Lima tickets.*
- **Money:** *Nuevos Soles are preferred in Cusco and Machu Picchu. Money can be exchanged at hotels in Lima and in the Andes. BE SURE to acquire a PIN for your credit card BEFORE you travel if you intend to use it at an ATM or at a currency exchange. Note: Visa cards are the most readily accepted credit cards in the Andes.*
- **Luggage:** *Plan on bringing only a small overnight bag on the train from Cusco to Machu Picchu. You can store your large bag and any extra luggage at your hotel in Cusco. Bring a luggage lock to secure any luggage stored in Cusco.*
- **Clothing:** *You will need warmer clothes for Cusco and Machu Picchu. Daytime temperatures in the Andes are likely to be in the upper 60's and lower 70's and can feel quite warm in the noon day sun; however it may dip below 40° F at night. You will need the warmth of a fleece sweater under your light jacket, but you will not need gloves or a parka.*
- **Laundry:** *It is possible to have your laundry done upon arrival in Cusco. Please check with your Machu Picchu extension guide for details.*
- **Toiletries:** *If you are prone to motion and/or altitude sickness, please be sure to bring necessary medications with you.*
- **Electricity:** *For the Andes, most outlets in Peru are equipped for 220 volts and use two other types of plugs: Flat blade plug - Two round pins. You'll need a plug adapter for re-charging batteries, but you shouldn't need a converter if your charger adapts to a voltage range.*
- **Water:** *Bottled water is available for purchase at your hotels and in gift shops. Please don't drink the water in the Andes!*
- **Miscellaneous:** *A small travel umbrella is more convenient in Cusco than a poncho.*
- **Tippling:** *A minimum of \$25 per person is suggested for guide tips in the Andes. \$20 for your guide and \$5 for your driver.*