

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions – Manu National Park Expeditions

Embarking on a journey into the untouched biodiversity of Manu National Park is an extraordinary experience, and proper preparation is key to a smooth adventure. Below, we answer the most essential questions regarding our routes, weather conditions, lodge amenities, health and safety guidelines, and packing recommendations.

When is the best time of year to visit Manu National Park?

The dry season, from April through October, is the ideal time to visit, offering clear skies and stable weather for all activities. Lower river levels during these months dramatically increase wildlife sightings along the shorelines. Additionally, these optimal water conditions allow our specialized boats to navigate directly downstream, minimizing travel time and ensuring a smooth, seamless journey.

November and December remain great alternatives with only occasional showers. However, the peak rainy season runs from January to March, when travel is not recommended due to high water levels and weather constraints in the jungle.

What is the journey from Cusco to Manu National Park and the return via Puerto Colorado like?

The expedition seamlessly combines a scenic overland drive with motorized river navigation:

- **Overland Descent:** We depart Cusco on a smooth, paved highway toward the historic town of Paucartambo (approx. 2 hours). From there, we descend through the breathtaking Manu Cloud Forest along a semi-paved road (4 to 5 hours). While rainfall is characteristic of the cloud forest, the route is safe, and we make curated stops along the way to observe endemic flora and fauna before reaching our first lodge.
- **River Navigation & Loop Return:** At Atalaya Port, our SERNANP-certified boat crew welcomes you aboard for our motorized navigation down the Alto Madre de Dios and Manu rivers toward the Reserved Zone. Over the entire itinerary, we spend approximately 14 to 15 hours navigating on comfortable, roofed boats equipped with padded seats and life jackets. The river journey concludes at Puerto Colorado, where private ground transport transfers us back to Cusco via the paved Interoceanic Highway.

Is there cell phone coverage or Wi-Fi access during the expedition?

Mobile coverage in the Manu rainforest is virtually non-existent, and cellular signal drops completely as we enter the jungle. However, Manu Tours Peru s.r.l. maintains permanent communication with our field crew via satellite and radio to continuously monitor the group's progress and safety.

Regarding internet access along the itinerary:

- **Cultural Zone:** Lodges in this region do not offer Wi-Fi or internet connectivity.
- **Reserved Zone & Maquisapayoj Lodge:** Limited satellite Wi-Fi is available. Guests can access this service directly at the lodges for a small hourly fee during designated times.

We strongly recommend informing family members that you will be disconnected for most of the trip, allowing you to fully disconnect and immerse yourself in the natural wilderness.

Can I charge my camera, phone, or electronic device batteries at the lodges?

Yes, although electricity availability depends on the region of the expedition:

- **Cloud Forest & Cultural Zone:** Lodges in these areas offer 24/7 continuous electricity (standard 220V outlets).
- **Reserved Zone (Casa Matsigenka):** As a remote protected area, power is generated via solar panels and is available only during scheduled evening hours (typically from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM) in communal areas.

Important Recommendations:

Bring spare camera batteries and a high-capacity portable power bank.

Drone Policy: In accordance with national park regulations (SERNANP) to protect wildlife, the operation of recreational drones is strictly prohibited inside Manu National Park.

What type of meals are served during the expedition, and how are special dietary needs or allergies handled?

At Manu Tours Peru s.r.l, we feature a professional field chef who prepares high-quality meals blending regional Novo-Amazonian fusion cuisine. Every menu is carefully balanced using fresh local ingredients to ensure optimal energy, nutrition, and food safety throughout the expedition.

- **Vegetarian & Vegan Diets:** We gladly cater to vegetarian and vegan preferences at no additional cost. Please inform us of your preference when submitting your booking form.
- **Food Allergies & Restrictions:** To ensure your safety, it is essential that you notify us of any food allergies, intolerances, or dietary restrictions prior to departure so our chef can customize suitable meal plans for you.

Is mineral water provided during the expedition, and how should I carry it?

Yes. To ensure proper hydration and reduce single-use plastic waste in the national park, our water supply operates as follows:

- **Supply:** Mineral water will be provided to guests starting on the evening of the first day at the lodge.
- **Refill Stations:** Every passenger must bring a 1-to-2-liter reusable water bottle or canteen. You can refill it with mineral water at the lodges before and after each tour activity or trail hike.

Are vaccinations required to visit Manu National Park?

While there are currently no mandatory vaccination requirements to enter Peru or Manu National Park, the Yellow Fever vaccine is strongly recommended as a precautionary measure for rainforest travel. We advise getting vaccinated 4 to 6 weeks prior to entering the jungle, following consultation with your physician. This ensures optimal immunity and allows sufficient time for any mild, temporary side effects to pass before your expedition begins.

Note on Malaria:

There is no vaccine for malaria. The risk of transmission within the Manu region is extremely low; however, if you seek additional prevention, consult your doctor regarding oral prophylaxis (antimalarial medication). Regardless, wearing long-sleeved clothing and applying high-concentration insect repellent (DEET-based or Picaridin) remains your best protection against insect bites.

What essential gear and clothing should I pack for the expedition?

To ensure a comfortable and safe adventure, we recommend packing light using a soft duffel bag or a 20L–30L daypack. Hard suitcases are discouraged due to boat space constraints. Essential items include:

- **Clothing:** Lightweight clothing in dark or earth tones (olive green, dark gray, brown, or navy blue; avoid bright colors and yellow), including long-sleeved and short-sleeved shirts/polos, a warm jacket for cool rainforest evenings, and a reliable rain jacket or poncho.
- **Footwear:** Broken-in hiking boots or trekking shoes, and sandals or light sneakers for relaxing around the lodges. We provide rubber boots for muddy trail treks; please specify your shoe size in your booking form.
- **Sun & Insect Protection:** High-concentration insect repellent (DEET-based or Picaridin), broad-spectrum sunscreen, and a sun hat.



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- **Personal Care & Gear:** Biodegradable toiletries to avoid contaminating the delicate ecosystem of Manu National Park, a headlamp with spare batteries, binoculars, a reusable water bottle, and dry bags for electronics.

You will find the full, detailed packing checklist on our website, where you can download it as a PDF under the item "**PDF Packing List**".

What are the booking, payment, and cancellation policies?

To guarantee and confirm your reservation, an initial deposit of 30% of the total tour rate is required via our official payment channels (bank transfer or Western Union). Any applicable transaction or transfer fees must be covered by the sender.

The remaining balance can be paid in one of two ways:

- **Pre-departure payment:** One month (30 days) prior to the tour start date, using the same payment method as the initial deposit (recommended if you prefer not to carry large amounts of cash during your stay in Peru).
- **In-person payment:** In cash (USD or PEN) one day before the tour departure, following your pre-tour briefing at your hotel in Cusco.

Cancellation Policy: Initial deposits are non-refundable, as they are immediately allocated to securing national park permits, lodge reservations, advance expedition logistics, and guaranteed fees for field staff (guide and cook). You will find our full Terms & Conditions in detail on our website.

What are the lodges in the jungle like, and what amenities do they offer?

At Manu Tours Peru S.R.L., we partner with low-impact eco-lodges designed to respect and preserve Manu's pristine natural environment:

- **Cloud Forest & Cultural Zone:** Lodges in these areas offer comfortable, standard-category accommodations (equivalent to 2- to 3-star comfort) featuring clean rooms, private bathrooms, and 24/7 continuous electricity.
- **Reserved Zone (Casa Matsigenka):** Please note that traditional hotel ratings do not apply in this protected area. Lodging is provided at Casa Matsigenka, an authentic, rustic eco-lodge managed directly by the indigenous Matsigenka community.
- **Standard Amenities & Inclusions:** Our standard tour itineraries include clean, comfortable rustic rooms equipped with mosquito netting over every bed, as well as well-maintained shared bathroom facilities. At Casa Matsigenka, solar-powered electricity is available during designated evening hours.



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- **Private Bathroom Upgrades:** If you prefer one of the limited bungalows with a private bathroom at Casa Matsigenka or an upgraded room in the Cloud Forest, please request this prior to receiving your official quote so we can apply promotional rates and provide accurate pricing.

What safety measures, emergency protocols, and physical requirements does Manu Tours Peru s.r.l. have?

Passenger safety and peace of mind are our absolute priorities. We maintain continuous oversight of our groups throughout the entire itinerary, across both land and river routes:

- **Evacuation Protocols & Travel Insurance:** In the event of a medical or logistical emergency, we immediately coordinate land or river evacuation to the nearest medical facility. For critical emergencies, we arrange emergency air evacuation (helicopter or private flight). Consequently, all passengers are required to hold comprehensive travel insurance covering medical emergencies and emergency evacuation.
- **First Aid & Snakebite Protocol:** Our expedition kits include specialized equipment, such as professional venom extractors for snakebites, allowing us to perform immediate field stabilization while coordinating transport to a health facility.
- **Medication Policy:** By legal regulation and medical safety protocol, our field staff is strictly prohibited from prescribing or administering medication. Passengers must bring a personal medical kit containing physician-approved medications (e.g., stomach remedies, pain relievers, antibiotics, or personal prescriptions).

Age Recommendations by Zone:

- **Cultural Zone:** Recommended for children aged 5 and older.
- **Reserved Zone:** Recommended for children aged 9–10 and older, due to extended boat travel and wilderness trail hikes.

Where can I store my large luggage, and what if I don't have a suitable daypack or bag?

Due to the nature of the journey—which involves frequent transfers between overland vehicles, riverboats, and trail walks to reach the deep jungle lodges—hard-shell or bulky suitcases cannot be accommodated. We advise traveling into the jungle with only your essential expedition gear. You can safely store your main luggage free of charge at your hotel's storage in Cusco or at our office.

Complimentary Waterproof Duffel Bag Loan: If you do not have a 20L–30L daypack or soft bag, we can lend you one waterproof duffel bag per passenger free of charge. Please specify this request when making your booking. At the end of the tour, simply leave the borrowed duffel bag at your hotel reception in Cusco.

Should I bring extra cash for the tour, and how are tips handled?

Yes, it is essential to bring extra cash in local currency (Peruvian Soles - PEN), preferably in small bills (10, 20, and 50 Soles denominations), as there are no ATMs or card payment facilities in the jungle.

- **Additional Expenses:** We recommend carrying 200 to 400 PEN per person for extra drinks at the lodges (beers, sodas, snacks), handcrafted souvenirs directly from local indigenous communities, or personal items.
- **Tipping:** Tipping is entirely optional and voluntary. If at the end of the expedition you feel that our field crew (guide, cook, boat driver, and assistant) provided exceptional service and you wish to express your appreciation, any tip amount is strictly at your own discretion.