

IF YOU GO

- **Getting there:** Delta, Continental, American Airlines and LAN Peru all have nonstop or direct flights to Lima, Peru, from the United States. Restricted round-trip airfare is approximately \$500 from Miami. International flight reservations can be made independently or through International Expeditions. LAN Peru flies nonstop from Lima to Iquitos for \$325 round trip. It is best to book this internal flight with your tour operator.

TOUR OPERATORS

- **International Expeditions**, a leading ecotourism company, books week-long cruises year-round. As of mid-September, cruises depart from Nauta rather than directly from Iquitos. Family-oriented and volunteer cruises are available. 800-633-4734; www.ietravel.com.

- **Delfin Amazon Cruises** offers shorter three and four-night cruises, leaving from the town of Nauta via Iquitos; www.delfinamazoncruises.com

DOLLARS & SENSE

- **What it costs:** The International Expeditions' 2010 price for the Amazon cruise ranges from \$3,148 to \$3,498 per adult (double occupancy), depending on month of travel and type of accommodation; a single supplement applies. Children ages 7-18 receive a \$150 discount. The 10-day tour price includes accommodations in a five-star Lima hotel, a half-day city tour of Lima, ground transport from Iquitos to Nauta, food, excursions, complimentary on-board laundry service and arrival/departure transfers. Bottled water is provided free on board; all other drinks are extra and are accounted for by honor system.

- **What to tip:** Suggested gratuities include \$85 per guide or \$125 to be shared by the crew for naturalist guides. Although no gratuity was suggested for the tour director, ours did an outstanding job so we tipped him. U.S. dollars are acceptable payment, but bring crisp, new bills, as those that are torn or worn will not be accepted for exchange by Peruvian banks. Bringing schools

supplies for visits to river communities is encouraged.

TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

- **When to go:** Although it can rain any time and the weather is always hot and humid, there is a dry season (June through November) and a rainy season (December through May) when the Amazon rises and can overflow its banks up to 45 miles inland. At the beginning of the rainy season, the river is still passable and its smaller tributaries are filled so exploring by boat is easier.
- **What to take:** International Expeditions sends an excellent list of items to bring that includes lightweight clothing, a hat with a wide brim, a compact waterproof poncho, sneakers or boat shoes, sturdy walking shoes or boots for land excursions, and a small backpack or carry-all bag (preferably waterproof). Don't skimp on insect repellent or a strong sun block (50 UVA or higher). Bring one set of high-powered binoculars for each traveler and a camera with a telephoto lens, especially for photography from the skiffs.
- **Precautions:** Malaria tablets plus vaccinations against yellow fever, typhoid and hepatitis A are recommended, but not required. Carry basic First Aid materials (the ship is also well-equipped for medical emergencies) plus a prescription antibiotic, such as Ciproflaxin, for diarrhea. All foods on board are washed with bottled water, but digestive tracts are sensitive.
- **Passports and Visas:** A U.S. passport valid for at least six months beyond your intended stay is required for entry into Peru. A tourist visa valid for up to 90 days is stamped in your passport upon arrival.