



Privately Guided Iquitos City Tour (2 hours or 6 hours)

Iquitos is a city born due to its perfect location along a bend of the great Amazon River just around the corner from Colombia and Brazil. The natural highways that lead up to this city of about 500,000 residents make it an ideal port and was one of the reasons Iquitos was the headquarters of Peru's rubber boom at the turn of the 19th century.

Our half day city tour will begin in the city's main Plaza de Armas to get you oriented. The central plaza is a place where people gather any hour of the day to socialize, relax, and share ideas. Here you will find the main church, Iglesia Matriz, which features fascinating religious paintings blending traditional Catholic elements with scenes and relics of the Amazon Rainforest. At one corner of the plaza is the silver "Iron House" designed by infamous French architect Gustave Eiffel which survives as one of the city's most impressive relics from the rubber era.

Your guide will then take you to Nanay Market & Port where it is said many years ago, the natives came together to found the city of Iquitos. There is also a small but bustling port of peque-peques, colorful wooden watertaxis, where the locals embark to travel to nearby communities. The Nanay market is also a fun place to explore, and your guide will point out typical foods such as marinated suri worms, grilled caiman alligators, tacacho banana balls, smoked cecina pork fillets, and natural fruit juices such as camu camu and cocona.



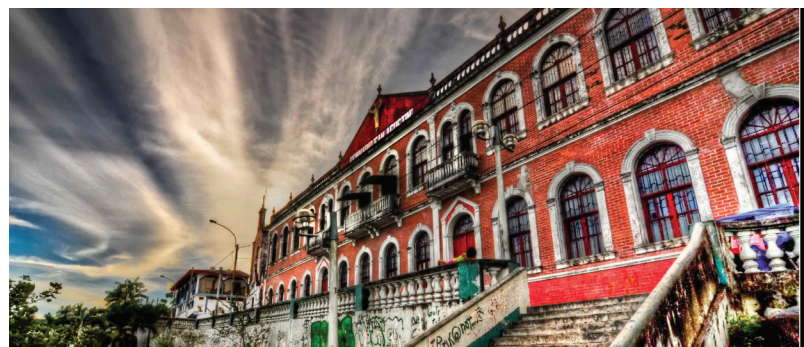
Main plaza & church of Iquitos



Belen floating market

After a short air-conditioned ride, you will find yourself in Belen floating market (high water season November to May). In this distinctive neighborhood, the people live in stilted homes which anticipate the rising and falling of the river throughout the seasons. During the high water season, wooden bridges link all of the homes as if a maze. The market itself gives many insights into life in Iquitos and Amazonia since this is where people come from around the region to both buy and sell food and goods. The fish section allows you a peek at the river creatures that lurk beneath the surface, and not to be missed is the "witches market" full of jungle potions, where your guide will explain some unique cultural beliefs.

Your day will end with a stroll along the Iquitos promenade (Malecon Tarapaca) which weaves along the Tarapaca River. Skirting its western side is an impressive if aesthetically out-of-place collection of 19th century European architecture built during the rubber boom. Aside from enjoying the calm landscape or dipping into one of the local bars and cafés, this is the perfect spot for people watching of the day to socialize, relax, and share ideas. Here you will find the main church, Iglesia Matriz, which features fascinating religious paintings blending traditional Catholic elements with scenes and relics of the Amazon Rainforest. At one corner of the plaza is the silver "Iron House" designed by infamous French architect Gustave Eiffel which survives as one of the city's most impressive relics from the rubber era.



19th century European architecture in Iquitos

Quistococha Animal Reserve (half day)

About 6.3 kilometers (4 miles) outside of Iquitos is a place where you can see many rare animals found in the Amazon Rainforest surrounding you. Its name comes from Quistococha Lagoon on the premises and creatures such as jaguars, ocelots, and marguay (big cats!), various monkey species, giant arapaima fish, and other animals call this their home. The serpentarium brings creepy crawlies to you, and at the aviary there are lively birds of all sizes and colors. Should the hot and humid jungle climate reach too deep into your skin, you might not be able to resist a dip at Tunchi Beach! The calm artificial lake beach is fenced for protection and is a pleasant oasis. Fishing and kayaking is also offered at Quistococha. This is a great destination for the whole family!



Tunchi Beach is a popular place to cool down

Pilpintuwasi Butterfly Farm & Amazon Animal Orphanage (half day)

Another intriguing side trip from Iquitos is Pilpintuwasi. Departing from Nanay port are small boats that take you and your guide to Pilpintuwasi, a butterfly farm and animal orphanage run by volunteers. Butterflies are delightful and important insects in the Amazon and play a big significant part in the jungle's overall ecology.

On arrival, a volunteer guide will welcome you to the well-nestled property and lead you to the eggs and larvae room. Here you will learn about the complete life cycle of a butterfly and their impressive development process. The full-grown butterflies in the prime of their lives are in another enclosure which you can walk through and interact with the delicate creatures directly.

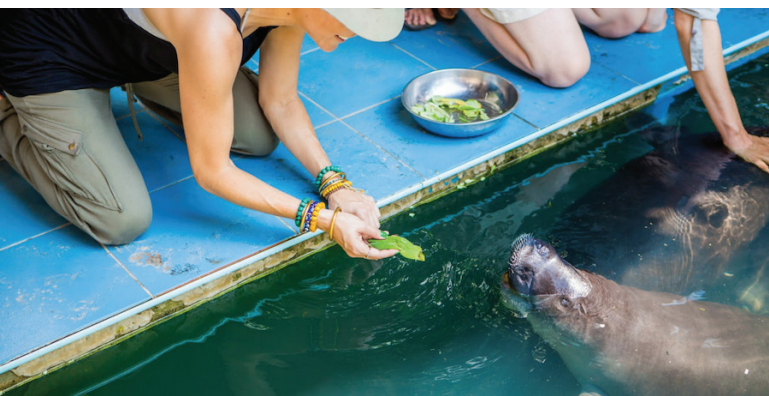
Just next to Pilpintuwasi is the Amazon Animal Orphanage. Here, the team works hard to save and rehabilitate animals that have been rescued from serving as pets or food. Favorites are the anteaters, monkeys, tapirs, jaguars, macaws, and more.



Learn all about butterflies and other jungle creatures at Pilpintuwasi

Manatee Rescue Center (1-2 hours)

Note: This destination visit is included on the last day of all our cruises; for guests departing early.



Feed rare river manatees by hand

The Peruvian Amazon's river manatees are a unique and adorable bunch, which is why so many people have taken to adopting them illegally as pets or for other purposes. The ACOBIA foundation (Centro de Rescate Amazónico) has dedicated itself and its crew of volunteers to saving and rehabilitating rescued manatees from various communities and markets. Through a rehab process which can be as long as 3 years, the animals are nursed back to full health and then taught how to survive once more in the wild. Volunteers also hold regular sessions to educate local citizens and schoolchildren so future abuse does not occur.

On your visit, you will learn about the manatees and also feed some babies from your hand!