



MARGARITA TOURS, INC.

We Are Professional Amazon Jungle Outfitters & Operators

GETTING TO THE PERUVIAN AMAZON: 2009

AIR ACCESS TO IQUITOS

The Peruvian Amazon is one of the most accessible parts of this impressive wilderness area. Iquitos, the largest city in the western Amazon basin, has an airport capable of servicing large jets, and has several daily connecting flights to Lima, the capital of Peru. There is no road access to Iquitos, and the only other means of reaching the city is by boat. There are no direct flights to Iquitos from outside of Peru, so international travelers need to book travel through Lima.

Lima is serviced by many airlines, with many daily flights from cities in the US, Europe and central and South America. Daily flights from Lima to Iquitos are on Lan Peru and Star Peru. Both are reputable airlines with good service and safety records. Flight schedules change regularly, so inquire about current availability of flights to Iquitos. Be sure to also reconfirm flights any flights 2-3 days prior to travel.

MAKING YOUR FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

Due to the changing airline market, internet sales, and passenger use of frequent flier miles, Margarita Tours does not price expeditions from the US or book flights. If you wish the added security of working with a regular travel agent, however, we recommend the agent below - we receive no commissions for any resulting sales. Many flights are available at the same cost over the internet, though in the event that you need to cancel or miss a flight, you then have to navigate the airlines regulations on your own.

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Make your reservations well in advance to ensure that space is available and so you can take advantage of the best fares. When you do receive your airline ticket, carefully check your actual ticket or e-ticket (not just the printed itinerary) to ensure that dates and times are correct. Two minutes of your time can save you hours of frustration later on! Send us your complete flight information - if you experience delays or problems, we will know where to look for you, or will be able to contact you.

The busiest times of the year for travel to or within Peru are late July through August (national and Incan holidays & festivals), and late December-early January. If you plan on traveling at these times, book flights as early as possible.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We do strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance when you book your flight. There is no predicting what might happen prior to your departure date – a traveling companion might become ill, you might be promoted at work, or you might discover that you have a new family member on the way! Whatever happens, if you have travel insurance you can rest assured that should you need to cancel your travel plans, that you will be able to get your money back. Travel insurance will also reimburse you for lost, damaged, or stolen luggage, extra costs or missed holiday days due to cancelled or delayed flights, and much more. Get it – it is worth the cost and so worth the peace of mind!

DEPARTING FROM YOUR “HOME” AIRPORT

Allow plenty of time to check in for flights. You should allow two hours for domestic flights, and three hours for international flights. Be certain to place any personal items that might be considered a security risk (nail clippers or files, pen knives, scissors, etc.) in checked luggage, or they may be confiscated when you pass through security. Remember to place any liquids or gels you may have in your hand carry in a 3-1-1 bag (3 oz or less volume in each item, placed in a re-sealable 1 quart bag – limit one bag per person). Review the hand luggage regulations and restrictions a couple of days before packing to ensure you don't experience delays.

ENTERING PERU – LIMA AIRPORT

The international airport at Lima is a newly reconstructed modern, safe airport. When you arrive on an international flight, you will be given an immigration form and a customs declaration form to fill out. Have these ready for presentation when you enter the airport (be sure to have a pen with your hand luggage!). You will first clear immigration, where tourists are given a standard 60 or 90 day stamp in their passport. If you are planning on staying beyond 60 days, be sure to let the immigration official know so that you receive the 90 day stamp. There are no fees, and a valid passport is all that is required from visitors from the Americas (apart from Cuba), Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and the EEC. Citizens of other countries may need a visa - contact the nearest Peruvian consulate or embassy for details. A portion of your immigration form will be returned to you with your passport - keep this form in your passport. It will be collected from you when you leave Peru.

After clearing immigration, you proceed to the baggage claim area, and once you have collected your baggage, you clear customs. Please note that even if you've been told that your luggage is booked all the way through to Iquitos, **YOU MUST CLAIM YOUR LUGGAGE IN LIMA!** Free baggage carts are available. Unless you are bringing in specialized equipment or commercial items that you are planning on leaving in Peru, it is not necessary to fill out the customs declaration card in detail - it is sufficient to write "personal items" or "cosas personales" rather than itemizing what you are bringing in. If you do need to pay customs duty on something, this is done before you leave the baggage claim area. As you depart the baggage claim area, you hand your customs declaration card to an agent, and are instructed to push a button. If a green light appears, proceed out of the customs area - you are clear to go. If a red light appears, your luggage will be inspected. Inspection of luggage is generally cursory if you do not have a large amount, and may consist only of passing it through an X-ray machine.

MAKING FLIGHT CONNECTIONS IN LIMA

Making connections is easy. Once you leave the customs area, you enter the terminal proper. There will be porters available if you need assistance with your baggage. \$1 per large bag is a standard tip. There will also be many taxi drivers offering transportation to town - just politely say "no thank you". The airport terminal is linear – just walk down the terminal until you find signs for the airline that you are flying to Iquitos on. Airline counters are clearly marked, and attendants speak Spanish, English, and often other languages as well. In general, you cannot check in for international flights more than three hours in advance of the departure time, but some airlines accept domestic baggage (for flights to Iquitos) many hours in advance – just ask at the counter if you can check in early. If you have lots of time before your flight, there are baggage locker facilities behind the escalators leading to the food court and flight departure areas (next to the exit from baggage claim for national flights – cost is \$3/bag/day). There are a number of restaurants, bars, shops and internet facilities on the upper level (departure level) of the concourse. The Starbucks has free WiFi access. You may wish to take a taxi into Lima to see some of the city sights if you have a lot of time between flights. The taxi drivers in the airport are licensed and knowledgeable - they will be able to make suggestions. There are also tourist information booths located throughout the airport.

Once you have checked in at the airline counter, you will proceed up the escalators to the upper level. There you will pay your domestic flight tax (currently \$6.05 – payable in US dollars or Peruvian solis), and proceed through security check to your departure gate.

HOTELS IN LIMA

Some international flights arrive at night, or you may wish just to relax in a quiet location for a few hours before making a connecting flight. We will be happy to make reservations for you at a secure, comfortable, and friendly hotel located less than 5 minutes from the airport – the Manhattan Inn Hotel (reservas@hmanhattan.com). The hotel staff speaks Spanish and English, and the hotel will pick you up at the airport. The hotel has a restaurant and bar for your convenience. Most other hotels are a 30-45 minute ride each way from the airport. Hotel costs are your responsibility, but are fairly reasonable (about \$40/single). If you are planning on spending a day or two to visit this historic city, you may prefer a hotel near the downtown or Miraflores areas. We will be happy to make recommendations, and many can be booked over the internet. The airport hotel (at the airport itself) is very expensive (over \$200/night).

ARRIVING IN IQUITOS

When you arrive in Iquitos, you simply claim your luggage off the belt and depart the terminal - there are no inspection or other procedures. Our English-speaking transfer agent will contact you inside the baggage claim area, and will arrange for handling of your baggage. The transfer agent will accompany you from the airport to your hotel in Iquitos or to the port facilities (if your boat is leaving immediately). In most cases, your expedition leader will be at the airport to meet you as well.

IF YOU ARE DELAYED

Travel schedules can sometimes get messed up. If a flight is delayed, or you miss a connection, we won't leave you in Iquitos on your own. If you're not on your scheduled flight, we check all later flights, and we also try and get in touch with you. If the expedition boat is departing, we will use a smaller boat to 'catch you up' with your expedition once you arrive. You can always count on having someone waiting at the Iquitos airport when your plane lands! Contact numbers for Margarita Tours and for hotels are given on the last page of your Travel Information document, and on the last page of detailed trip itineraries.