

BIRDWATCHING & PHOTOGRAPHY TOURS IN SOUTH AMERICA

Tambopata Macaw Clay Lick

Dawn at the largest known parrot clay lick on Earth, from the only lodge inside the Tambopata National Reserve.

Photo by Paul Bertner for Rainforest Expeditions

DURATION

5 days / 4 nights (3–9 day options)

DEPARTURE

Fly Cusco or Lima to Puerto Maldonado

LODGES

Refugio Amazonas & Tambopata Research

ACCESS

1 h by road, then 1–2.5 h upriver by boat

FROM

\$813 per person

3 days — Posada or Refugio \$813 · 4 days — Posada Amazonas \$1,219.50 · 4 days — Refugio Amazonas \$1,240.50 · 4 days — Tambopata Research \$1,545 · 5 days — Refugio + Research \$2,512 · 6 days — Tambopata Research \$2,575 · 5 days — Posada + Research \$2,787

Our Tambopata macaw clay lick tour is built around the two greatest collpas in the Amazon. The Colorado clay lick — a bank of exposed river cliff roughly 500 m long and 25–30 m high — is the largest known parrot clay lick anywhere on Earth, and it sits a short walk from the Tambopata Research Center. An hour downriver, the Collpa Chuncho draws what is probably the densest gathering of large macaws in the world: Red-and-green, Scarlet and Blue-and-yellow Macaws dropping onto the clay at first light alongside Mealy and Yellow-crowned Amazons, Blue-headed Parrots, Dusky-headed and White-eyed Parakeets. Seven macaw species have been recorded along this stretch of river — Scarlet, Red-and-green, Blue-and-yellow, Chestnut-fronted, Red-bellied, Red-shouldered and the scarce Blue-headed Macaw. On a good morning at Colorado you can log seventeen species of parrot and macaw from a single blind, with well over a hundred large macaws on the wall at once.

TARGET SPECIES

Red-and-green Macaw
Blue-and-yellow Macaw
Blue-headed Parrot
Hoatzin
Agami Heron
Pale-winged Trumpeter
Red-bellied Macaw
White-throated Toucan
King Vulture
Jaguar
Saddle-backed Tamarin

Scarlet Macaw
Mealy Amazon
White-eyed Parakeet
Horned Screamer
Sungrebe
Blue-headed Macaw
Undulated Tinamou
Harpy Eagle
Giant River Otter
Black Caiman

DAY BY DAY

Day 1 — up the Tambopata to Refugio Amazonas

Fly into Puerto Maldonado, then an hour by road to the river port and an hour upriver by boat, birding the banks for Pied Plover, Collared Plover, Sand-colored Nighthawk and Black Skimmers. Refugio Amazonas stands in a 200-hectare Brazil-nut concession; the afternoon goes to its 40 m canopy tower for toucans, macaws and canopy raptors, and the evening to a researcher's talk on the Wired Amazon projects.

Day 2 — deeper in, to the Tambopata Research Center

A dawn session on the trails, then the long, slow run upriver into the reserve proper — the stretch where jaguars turn up on the beaches. The Research Center is the only lodge inside the Tambopata National Reserve. We settle in and walk the Overlook Trail in the afternoon, with Howler and Dusky Titi Monkeys and a first look over the river.

Day 3 — the clay licks

The centrepiece. A pre-dawn walk to the Colorado clay lick, where hundreds of parrots and dozens of large macaws work the bank as the light comes up — Red-and-green, Scarlet and Blue-and-yellow Macaws, Mealy Amazons, Blue-headed Parrots and more. We stay until the wall clears, then bird the floodplain trail and the island back at the lodge, and finish with the evening lecture on macaw biology from the project's own researchers.

Day 4 — Chunchu, terra firme and the palm swamp

A second clay-lick morning — Chunchu, an hour downriver, when the season and the river favour it, or a later session at Colorado, where activity often peaks between nine and ten. The afternoon works the terra firme trail and the aguaje palm swamp for Red-bellied Macaws coming in to the aguaje palms and Saddle-backed Tamarins, and we close with a sunset drift down the Tambopata.

Day 5 — downriver and out

A last morning on the trails or at the lick, then the run back downriver and the road to Puerto Maldonado for the afternoon flight.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- Lodge accommodation at Refugio Amazonas and the Tambopata Research Center
- All meals, tea and coffee, plus a welcome drink on arrival
- Road and river transfers from Puerto Maldonado airport and back
- All guided excursions, including the clay-lick sessions
- Evening lectures by the resident researchers
- Tambopata National Reserve entry and the Wired Amazon contribution

NOT INCLUDED

- Flights to and from Puerto Maldonado
- The first day's breakfast and the last day's dinner
- Soft drinks, alcohol and souvenirs
- Travel insurance, personal expenses and tips

Ready to book, or want it tailored?

wildandestours.com/tambopata-macaw-clay-lick-tour/ · sales@wildandestours.com

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