

Destinations

Travel Agents' Guide to Worldwide Destinations

by **JAX FAX**



Page 10 ▶

Lycian Way



LUXE SAFARIS **PG18**



JAPAN **PG20**



MEXICO **PG22**



CARIBBEAN **PG26**



NEW YORK **PG28**



Central and South American Adventure

ICONIC ALLURE AND
OFF-THE-BEATEN PATH
ADVENTURES

By Karen Loftus

Aerial view of the Amazon Rainforest



Chagres, Panama

In the adventure sector, Central and South American destinations continue to rise. The bio-diversity and ever-changing landscapes lend themselves to all, from nature watching to intrepid adventures, and everything in between. These three adventure destinations each have the well-tread, iconic hotspots, as well as the hidden gems.

PANAMA

Everyone knows about Panama's iconic Canal, but there is so much more to see in this wildly diverse Central American country.

CASCO VIEJO

Panama's Casco Viejo is a great place to base for a Panama Canal visit. Once that's ticked off your list, there are plenty of adventurous directions to head in, within and just outside of the city.

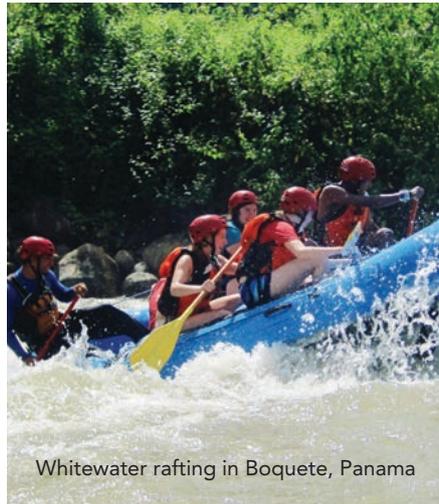
To get your hike on, head to Soberania and Chagres National Parks. If on Las Cruces Trail (Camino de Cruces), which dates back to the 16th century, in Soberania, you'll share the trail with 525 species of birds and 105 mammals. Hiking to the top of Boss Mountain (3,000 ft.) in Chagres on a clear day, you get a view of Panama Canal and you can see both the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean.

For island adventures, the San Blas Islands is a great getaway from the city. Make a day or several days of it by visiting any of the 365 islands and keys. For urban

adventure, get an authentic and inspirational look at this hip little city on a tour led by ex-gang members. **Fortaleza Tours** is run by Esperanza Social Club, which rehabilitates the gangs. (www.esperanzasvc.org/fortaleza-tours)

BOQUETE

Located in Panama's northwest Chiriqui province along the Costa Rica border, Boquete offers the best whitewater



Whitewater rafting in Boquete, Panama

rafting in the country on the Chiriqui Viejo river. For serious trekkers, head to the nearby Baru Volcano. Panama's tallest peak can be reached in a single day summit. While heading back down to the Pacific Coast from Boquete, the Chiriqui Marine National Park is a great drop off for sea kayaking, snorkeling or simply kicking back on the uninhabited Isla Gamez.

Custom made Panama tours can be arranged by **Panama Vacations**. (www.vacationtopanama.com) www.visitpanama.com

PERU

Yes, Machu Picchu is the obvious must do, but if heading in that direction, consider the road less traveled.

MACHU PICCHU

Aside from celebrating their 10 year



Lares Trail

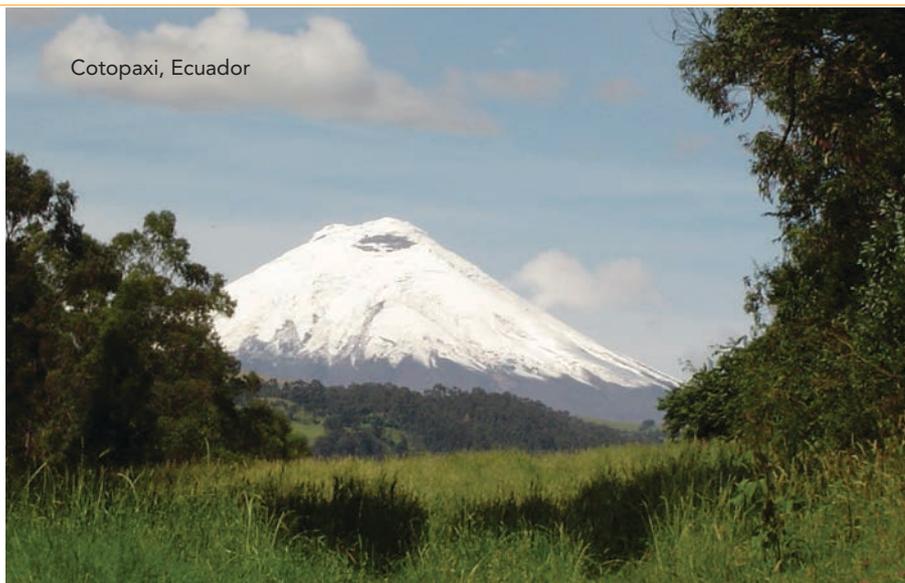
anniversary, **Mountain Lodges of Peru (MLP)** (www.mountainlodgesofperu.com) has several reasons to celebrate. They were recently recognized by *Travel & Leisure's* World's Best Awards, awarded 4th place as World's Best Tour Operator. At the Adventure Travel World Summit in Alaska, they were the first place winners of 2016 "Adventure in Motion" award for ATTA's adventure film contest. The film and the trek on the Salkantay Trail is otherworldly.

If you want to star in your own epic adventure, make your way to Machu Picchu's off-the-beaten path trails with MLP. The Lares Trail is another lesser known route to Machu Picchu. Lares from Cuncani to Huancahuasi, across the Cruzcosa Pass, is a four-hour trek where you will see no one except a villager or two. The scenery is stunning and serene, punctuated with wild horses, llamas and dogs. As the sun sets, it's a dead run to the Huaca Huasi Lodge. In between piscos and the fresh cuisine at dinner, go for a mind-blowing massage to prep you for the next day's nine-hour trek. The staff are locals, guides impeccable and experience is authentic and intrepid.

AMAZON

Once out of the mountains, head for the water. The Amazon is the most biodiverse place on the planet, with more than 400 species of mammals, nearly 1,400 birds and some 3,000 fish. Hop on **Aria's** (www.aquaxpeditions.com/luxury-cruise-ships/aria-amazon/) luxury riv-

Cotopaxi, Ecuador



erboat, featuring sixteen 250-square foot suites with floor-to-ceiling glass windows, perfect for taking in the wilds. Similar to a safari schedule, you will see monkeys, sloths and an endless array of birds - from macaws to parrots, toucans to hawks. You may or may not see a jaguar and an anaconda, but you are sure to see the famous pink dolphins on your twice-daily skiff excursions. Sundowners involve a quiet bob on the river with chilled champagne in hand.

www.visitperu.com

ECUADOR

The Galapagos has long been attracting intrepid travelers to Ecuador. There are several companies cruising in that direction today. Some companies do it better than others.

GALAPAGOS

Natural Habitat (www.nathab.com) has the best guide-to-guest ratio in the islands. With a small group of no more than eight to ten travelers, their immersive week-long itinerary on any of their four privately chartered yachts will have

you snorkeling with sea lions, sunbathing with iguanas and scouting for whales. With Natural Habitat you can go for ultra-luxurious or classic and comfortable. Either way, your trip is 100-percent carbon-offset—Natural Habitat is the world's first carbon-neutral travel company.

COTOPAXI VOLCANO

Located in the heart of the Central Andes of Ecuador, surrounded by impressive volcanoes, **Tierra del Volcan (www.tierradelvolcan.com)** adventure tour operators offers multi-day mountain biking, horseback riding and trekking trips, including lodge to lodge treks. If on horse you will ride through the Andes, the Hacienda Hills and Cotopaxi National Park. On bike, expect to shred Metropolitan Park, El Tambo Trail and Cotopaxi. The Volcano treks have you hitting Pasochoa Volcano trek and Cotopaxi National Park. The impressive snow capped Cotopaxi is the world's tallest and most active volcano. You are in safe, yet adventurous hands with Tierra del Volcan, which was recognized by Men's Journal for having one of the top adventures worldwide.

www.ecuador.travel

NEWS

QUITO TOURISM NEWS

Quito hosted more than 30,000 people at the Habitat III conference, the global summit of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in October. The event is celebrated every 20 years. It is expected that the forum will boost tourism arrivals and the economy with estimated revenue of \$31.5 million dollars in the next five years. The Metropolitan District of Quito has 713 accommodations including 44 five and four-star hotels, 42 three-star properties and 627 lodgings made up of rental homes, hostels, and hotels on the outskirts. Quito's Mariscal Sucre International Airport is located 20 miles from the Metropolitan District. The new airport has a passenger terminal of more than 40,000 square feet, can host larger capacity aircraft, and its geographical location allows for more direct nonstop flights from more distant destinations, opening up the possibility of more international connections.

<http://quito.com.ec/en>

PERU

EXPEDITION PACKAGE

www.ecoamericatours.com

\$2,853

BEST BUYS!

EcoAmerica Tours is offering a value-priced First Class Premier Peruvian Expedition package, with the opportunity to join a group of expeditioners in search of the Hidden Treasures of the Incas. This 9D/8N package has guaranteed departures through 2017, with a limit of sixteen guests per group. Accompanied by locally-based English speaking host-guides, you will experience their knowledge and passion for this extraordinary country. Offering authentic Peruvian flavor and genuine hospitality, this tour features four star hotels with great locations and excellent guest services.

BRAZIL

AGENT COMMISSION

www.airlinepros.com

3 Percent

Brazil has never been so close! **Avianca Brazil**, a Star Alliance member, has released a Travel Agent Notice regarding new commission policy. US travel agents earn 3% when you book Avianca Brazil through your GDS. The company also announced that they are now accepting Visa and Mastercard. For more information, email aviancabrazil@airlinepros.com