



Amazon Basin

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Best Places to Eat

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- ➔ Las Margaritas (p281)
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Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Reserva Natural Palmari (p281)
- ➔ Malokas Napū (p280)
- ➔ Amazon B&B (p275)
- ➔ Waira Suites Hotel (p275)
- ➔ Mahatu Jungle Hostel (p274)

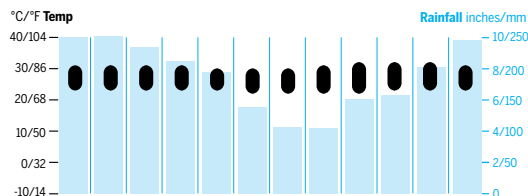
Why Go?

Amazon. The very word evokes images of pristine jungle, incredible wildlife and one famous river. The Amazon basin, which Colombians call Amazonia, is a 643,000-sq-km region accounting for a third of Colombia's total area – about the size of California. Visitors can never quite account for the strange exhilaration they feel when they come face-to-face with the rainforest for the first time.

With transportation limited to rivers that crisscross the jungle, indigenous groups deep in the jungle have managed to keep their cultures intact. But in the cities, many indigenous and mestizo (mixed race) people now live modern lifestyles, driving Yamahas and only breaking out their traditional garb and customs for the benefit of tourists. A visit here remains a transcendent experience, from thrilling rainforest treks to simple hammock siestas soundtracked by the otherworldly sounds of the jungle.

When to Go

Leticia



Sep–Nov Lower water levels afford excellent hiking and reveal white-sand beaches on the Río Yavarí.

Mar–May Get closer to the canopy in wet season, the climax of bird-watching and wildlife season.

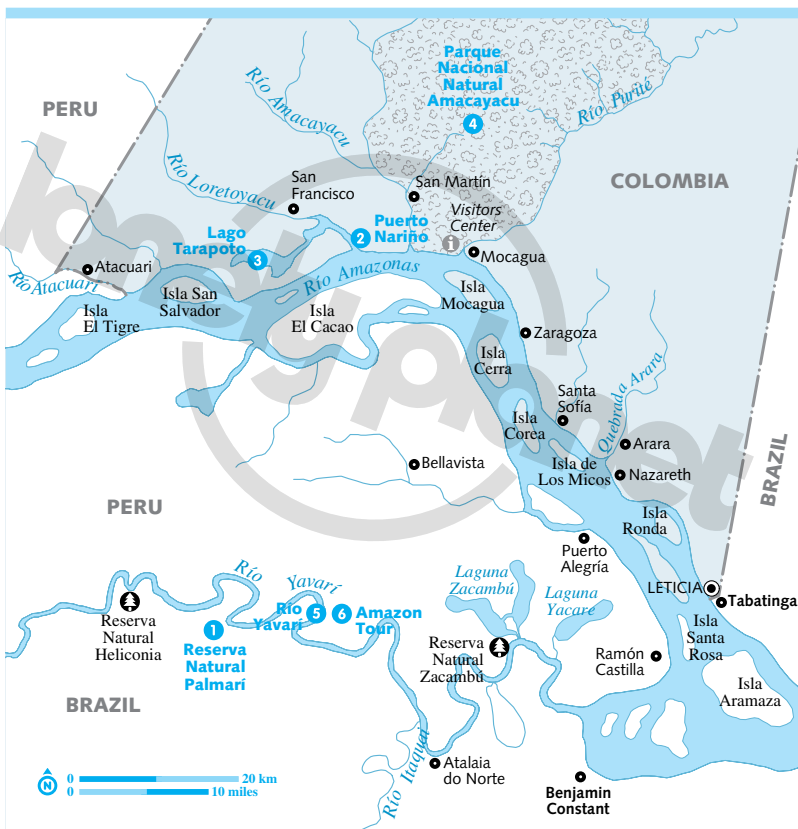
Jul & Aug Loathe mosquitoes? The *terra firme* forest sees most retreat to the canopy.

Leticia

8 / POP 39,667 / ELEV 95M

As the capital city of the Amazonas province, Leticia is the largest city for hundreds of kilometers yet still looks and feels very much like a small frontier town. It's located on the Amazon River at the crossroads – or more accurately, the cross-river – point where Colombia, Brazil and Peru meet. Leticia is located about 800km from the nearest Colombian highway.

Leticia was founded in 1867 as San Antonio. The origin of its current name has been lost to history. In any case, it was part of Peru until 1922 when both countries signed a controversial agreement that ceded the land to Colombia. In 1932 a war broke out between Colombia and Peru, finally ending in 1933 after the League of Nations negotiated a cease-fire, ultimately awarding Leticia to Colombia. In the 1970s Leticia became a lawless hub of narcotics trafficking until



AMAZON BASIN LETICIA

Amazon Basin Highlights

- 1 Spend a few days observing abundant wildlife at the excellent **Reserva Natural Palmari** (p281).
- 2 Unwind in the car-free, sustainable and funky remote village of **Puerto Nariño** (p279).
- 3 Spot pink and gray dolphins on the warm waters of the mighty **Lago Tarapoto** (p280).
- 4 Be serenaded by parrots in the rainforest of **Parque Nacional Natural (PNN) Amacayacu** (p279).
- 5 Slip silently into the jungle by canoe up the tributaries of the **Río Yavari** (p281).
- 6 Go beyond the lodges on a multiday **Amazon tour** (p273), where you'll really be welcomed to the jungle!