

MADRE DE DIOS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Location: The department of Madre de Dios is located in the southeastern part of Peru.

Area: 85 182 km²

Capital: Puerto Maldonado

Altitude: 183 m.a.s.l.

Average annual temperature: 26° C (maximum 34° C and minimum 21° C). The rainy season runs from December through March.

ACCESS ROUTES

By land: The most recommended routes are as follows:

Lima-Arequipa-Cusco-Puerto Maldonado (2 024 km). The trip takes about 42 h.

Lima-Nasca-Abancay-Cusco-Puerto Maldonado (1 619 km). The trip takes about 43 h.

By land – by river: From Cusco to Paucartambo-Salvación by land, from Boca Manu-Colorado on boat along the Madre de Dios river to Puerto Maldonado, the trip takes about 4 days.

By air: There are routine flights from Lima (about 1 h 30 min) and Cusco (about 45 min).



*Tambopata Jungle, Tambopata,
Madre de Dios
Anibal Solimano / PromPerú*

HISTORICAL OVERLOOK

There is evidence of human presence in this region before the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire. Petroglyphs have been found in the Palotoa-Shinkebenia and Urubamba rivers, as well as in the Pantiacolla Mountain Range (in the high upper heads of Madre de Dios river) where remains have also been found. The first settlers of Madre de Dios are believed to have appeared thousands of years ago with the arrival of the Arahuaacos, from which tribe many other ethnic groups emerged. Later on, they had contact with the Incas and the Spaniards. Puerto Maldonado was founded by the First Superintendent and Supreme Delegate of the Government, Don Juan S. Villalta, on July 10th, 1 902, on what is now known as Pueblo Viejo. The name Puerto Maldonado is an homage to the brave explorer Faustino Maldonado who traveled along the waters of the Madre de Dios river and engraved his name on the trunk of a large tree in the confluence of the Madre de Dios and Tambopata rivers. However, it was not until 1985 that the date of the foundation of Puerto Maldonado was made official.

OUTSKIRST OF THE CITY OF PUERTO MALDONADO

Manu Biosphere Reserve

The Manu National Park, spreading across 1 532 806 ha, is the largest protected natural area of its kind in Peru. Together with the Reserved Zone and the Cultural Zone, it forms what is known as the Manu Biosphere Reserve (recognized by the UNESCO in 1 977). Located in the departments of Cusco and Madre de Dios, it spreads across the entire basin of the Manu river.

Visits to the National Park are not allowed. However, the adjacent Reserved Zone and Cultural Zone have the same attractions and several tourist lodgings.



*Otorongo, Madre de Dios
Anibal Solimano / PromPerú*

There are many access routes to the Manu Reserve, the main ones departing from the city of Cusco, by land (about 12 h) up to Atalaya or Shintuya, and then by river (about 6 h) through the Alto Madre de Dios and Manu rivers, or by air (about 30 minutes) up to the locality of Boca Manu and then on boat along the Manu river (about 4 h).

Macaw Clay Lick

Located in the Tambopata-Candamo Zone, on the left bank of the Tambopata river, 70 km from Puerto Maldonado and about 8 h ride on motorboat, this area is known for its variety of macaws and because it is the largest colpa (clay lick) in the Peruvian Amazon region, gathering a large number of macaws, parrots and parakeets. Every morning at 6:00 a.m. these birds perform their fluttering ritual before ingesting clay in the river bank. This spectacle lasts approximately 25 to 30 minutes, after which the birds leave to return the next day.

Bahuaja-Sonene National Park (Tambopata-Heath)

Bearing a local native name, this conservation unit spreads across 320 thousand hectares. It is located in the province of Tambopata, department of Madre de Dios, about 5 h travel along the Tambopata river or 1 day along the Madre de Dios river. The park is home to an extraordinary variety of species of wildlife flora and fauna. (*)



Butterfly, Tambopata, Madre de Dios
Aníbal Solimano / PromPerú

Pampas del Heath

Located southeast of Puerto Maldonado, the trip starts in Puerto Maldonado, sailing down the Madre de Dios river up to the Heath river (about 4 h), then sailing along Heath river (1 day). These pampas are the sole vegetation formation of the savanna type, buried deep in the heart of the Peruvian rainforest. They are also used as shelters by unique species of wildlife fauna. At present, this place has become part of the Bahuaja-Sonene National Park. (*)

Tambopata-Candamo Reserved Zone

Located 40 km from Puerto Maldonado and 3 h sailing the Tambopata river on a motorized canoe, the reserved zone comprises the basin of Tambopata, Malinoswki and La Torre rivers, as well as Tavera and Candamo rivers. On the north, the zone goes along the edge of Madre de Dios river. Most of the forest inside the reserve is intact. (*)

Tres Cruces

This natural lookout is located in a road off the Paucartambo-Salvación Highway. Access can be reached from Cusco. This area is famous for the white ray phenomenon that takes place while the sun appears on the horizon. The light irradiated by the sun when it crosses the atmosphere becomes distorted as if it were crossing a prism, producing the illusion of three suns at a time, one of which seems to be bouncing. This peculiar swinging of the sunlight takes place in the dawn of the winter solstice (June 22nd). On any date, however, it is possible to see spectacular dawnings when the sun seems to emerge from the cloudy jungle, which visitors can make out far to the east more than 100 km away.

Sandoval Lake

Located on the right bank of Madre de Dios river, 10 km from Puerto Maldonado. The trip on motorboat takes approximately 25 minutes followed by a 1 ½ h walk in the forest. During the journey visitors can observe a large variety of flora species such as orchids, platanillos and hugurahuis. As regards wildlife fauna, there are

(*)**Note:** To go into the Tambopata Reserve Zone, the Bahuaja-Sonene National Park and Pampas de Heath, visitors must request an authorization at the office of INRENA (see Directory of Institutions).

large numbers of ducks, giant otters, caimans, wild chickens (shansho), turtles (charapas) and a large variety of fish such as paiche. There is a section in the lake in which temperature ranges from 20° C to 24° C, here visitors can enjoy a refreshing bath free of danger. Experienced rowers take visitors on canoes on excursions across the lake to watch the wildlife flora and the birds that live in the surroundings.

Valencia Lake

This lake is located 60 km from Puerto Maldonado. In the four hour ride on motor boat visitors can see the settlements of the Huaracayos, an aboriginal tribe. There is a great variety of flora and fauna all over this lake. Fishing lovers will find a large variety of fish species.

FOLKLORE

The traditional dances of this region are characterized for being vivid representations of animal life, myths, legends and mysteries of the jungle. The best examples include the changanakuy, the otorongo and the suri as well as its festivities.

HANDICRAFTS

Visitors can purchase some typical jungle handicrafts such as arrows and bows, decorated with exotic feathers and mobiles made of beautiful paiche fish scales.

Note: Exportation of any object (crown or collar) made with feathers from macaws or palos de lluvia is forbidden unless one has an authorization from INRENA.

GASTRONOMY

Typical dishes:

- Patasca or caldo de mondongo (tripe soup with maize, mint and giblets).
- Sarapatera (soup based on turtle, banana and fariña or cassava meal, cooked in the turtle's shell).
- Juane (steamed rice tamales seasoned with turmeric and stuffed with chicken chunks, wrapped in bijao leaves).
- Inchicapi (chicken soup with peanuts, cilantro and cassave)
- Timbuche (soup based on fish, green banana and cilantro).
- Asado de venado (roasted deer) served with rice and green banana.
- Tacacho con cecina (coal cooked or fried crushed banana mixed with lard and cured meat).
- Asado de picuro (roasted picuro, an Amazonian rodent famous for its delicious meat)
- Suri frito (fried suri) served with boiled banana,
- Caldo de carachama (thick soup based on a fish named carachama, bananas and cilantro).

The traditional drinks include:

- Masato (drink based on crushed cooked cassave fermented with sweet potato or sugar).
- Refresco de aguajina (delicious aguaje drink).
- Refresco de pihuayo.
- Chapo (drink prepared with banana and sugar, served cold).

FESTIVITIES

Feast of San Juan (June)

The influence of John the Baptist as a symbol is very strong in the Peruvian jungle because of the importance of water as a vital element in the entire Amazonian region. This is why this feast is celebrated with typical bands and the region's traditional dishes.

Other important festivities: San Pedro y San Pablo in the hamlet of la Cachuela and the Tourist and Ecological Week of Madre de Dios.

SERVICES

Airport

Aeropuerto Internacional Padre José Aldamiz
Carretera La Pastora – La Joya km 7.
Phone: (084) 57-1533 / 57-1531.

Land Transportation

There are no land terminals, however most of the carrier companies are gathered in Jr. Tacna block 3; Jr. Ica block 5 and Jr. Ernesto Rivera block 8.

Health Centers

Hotel Santa Rosa
Jr. Cajamarca 171.
Phone: (084) 57-1019 / 57-1046.
24 hour service.

Police Stations

Policía Nacional del Perú Sub-Región de Madre de Dios.
Jr. Daniel Alcides Carrión.
Phone: (084) 57-1022 / 57-1077 / 57-2706.
24 hour service.

Handicrafts Markets

Artesanía Shabuya.
Plaza de Armas 279.
Phone: (084) 57-1856.

Artesanía Souvenir Manu.
Aeropuerto Padre José.
Phone: (084) 57-3451.
Open: mornings only.

Post Offices

Av. León Velarde 675, Pto. Maldonado.
Phone: (084) 57-1088.
Open: Monday to Saturday 8:00-20:00, Sun: 8:00-15:00.

INFORMATION

Regional Tourism and Industry Office

Av. Fitzcarrald 411, Madre de Dios.
Phone: (084) 57-1164.
Phone/fax: (084) 57-1413.

PromPerú

Tourist Information Service

Phone/fax: (511) 224-9355.
Open: Monday to Friday 9:00-17:30.
Phone: (511) 574-8000.
24 hour service.
E-mail: iperu@promperu.gob.pe
<http://www.peru.org.pe>

**PromPerú / Indecopi
Tourist Protection Bureau**

Phone/fax: (511) 574-8000

24 hour service.

Phone: 0-800-42579 (free call from Peru's provinces)

Open: Monday to Friday 8:30-16:30.

E-mail: tour@indecopi.gob.pe

**Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales
INRENA**

(National Institute of Natural Resources)

Dirección Sub-regional Agraria Madre de Dios

Av. 29 de Julio 482, Puerto Maldonado.

Calle Diecisiete 355, Urb. El Palomar, San Isidro, Lima.

Phone: (511) 224-3298

Open: Monday to Friday 9:00-17:00.

E-mail: inrenabibli@terra.com.pe

WEBSITES

<http://perutruavelnet.com/articulo.asp?cod=19988142> ⁽¹⁾

http://www.travelvantage.com/per_amaz_dios.html ⁽¹⁾

http://www.rcp.net.pe/peru/madre_de_dios/madre_de_dios.html ⁽¹⁾

<http://www.virtualperu.net/> ⁽¹⁾

<http://www.rcp.net.pe/peru/cusco/manu.html> ⁽¹⁾

<http://www.allperu.com/PERU1F0.htm> ⁽¹⁾

(1) Private and/or foreign web page