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# Cruising

## Down the Amazon



### THE AMAZON RIVER

The Amazon River is arguably the largest river in the world rivalled only by the mighty Nile in Africa. The Amazon River's headwaters in South America originate in Peru with the Upper Amazon area in Peru consisting of a series of major river systems that flow North and South into the Marañón and Ucayali (major Amazon River tributaries) and the Amazon River. At its widest point the Amazon River is 11 km/7 miles wide during the low water season, but during the high water season, when the Amazon floods the surrounding plains, the Amazon River can be up to 45km/28 miles in breadth.



THERE IS A RIVER THAT TAKES US DEEP INTO THE HEART OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST SPECTACULAR JUNGLES. ITS LANDSCAPE GOES BEYOND THE LIMITS OF YOUR IMAGINATION – HOME TO MORE THAN 1000 SPECIES OF EXOTIC FLOWERS AND ANCIENT TREES, HUNDREDS OF MAMMALS, OVER 400 SPECIES OF BIRDS AND SO MUCH MORE. TO REACH IT TAKES A JOURNEY THAT FEW TRAVELLERS HAVE EXPERIENCED BEFORE. THE M/V ARIA IS CERTAINLY NOT YOUR AVERAGE CRUISE SHIP. IT IS DESIGNED TO BRING YOU AND THE EXOTIC AMAZON WILDLIFE TOGETHER. IT IS A DREAM THAT TURNS INTO REALITY.

**T**he M/V Aria can accommodate a maximum of 32 cruise ship guests plus crew. This luxury cruise ship is the perfect size to sail along the Amazon River, providing extremely comfortable lounge, dining and sleeping accommodations and modern navigation technologies and standards for cruise ship travel and safety on the water. The Aria's story starts with Aqua Expeditions who are recognized worldwide as the leader in luxury, small-ship cruising on the world's greatest rivers. After bringing the first luxury cruise line to the Amazon River in Peru in 2008 with the M/V Aqua – an architecturally designed, custom-built vessel offering travellers 5-star accommodations, gourmet cuisine and privately guided shore excursions – they sought to expand their offering. "I had long dreamed of taking visitors to the Amazon – the world's last great unexplored region. I wanted to give people a chance to see and feel this mighty river and its tributaries up close without sacrificing creature comforts. We launched our first five star vessel, the Aqua in 2008. Almost immediately we were selling out and we realized we needed a second ship to meet demand," says Aqua Expeditions Founder, Francesco Galli Zugaro.

And so began the challenging process of building the Aria, a 147 foot luxury cruise liner that now explores and navigates through the remote waters of the northern Amazon River in Peru and the build itself is as exciting a story as any voyage aboard the completed vessel. Zugaro explains, "It was a great challenge – total construction time for the 32 passenger

Aria took 13 months as we gathered everything we needed to create a five star vessel sourcing goods from all over the world. We built in Iquitos. It was a tough task – we had to battle extreme heat and bad rain forest storms, logistical issues surrounding sourcing supplies and finally the logistical component of building in the furthest inland seaport in the world."

The Aria was custom built by architect Jordi Puig and the challenging logistics included employing over 200 people who worked for 395 days to build the vessel in one of the most remote shipyards, in one of the most remote cities in the world. The builders worked on land for 300 days and it took 10 days and just over 80 people to bring the vessel from the shipyard to the water. Goods were purchased and imported from all over the world including light fixtures from Spain, the best cottons and linens from Peru, state of the art kitchen supplies from the United States, encapsulated noise reducing generators and exclusive custom-made furniture from Brazil, bathroom fixtures from Italy, and wallpaper and interior décor from Malaysia. The purchase list culminated in two new Cummins 405 Marine Engines to power the vessel along the Amazon River.

On board, the Aria now boasts amenities from the best natural products in the Amazon, 16 250 square foot designer suites, unforgettable movie screen sized picture windows, central air conditioning, a menu created by executive chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino and a luxurious sun deck. All





assembled and designed, Francesco says, by 100% pure Peruvian Human Talent.

The Aria can accommodate up to 32 guests in 16 handsomely decorated, air-conditioned designer suites measuring approximately 240 square feet. Four of these suites can be interconnected to cater to families. Each suite boasts outside facing panoramic picture windows, en suite lounge areas, internal communication systems, and en suite bathrooms with a round the clock supply of hot water.

The crew consists of 24 cruise ship staff including a Cruise Director and a paramedic, plus four English-speaking naturalist guides. The Aria's social areas include an indoor bar-lounge, dining room, outside lounge, outdoor Jacuzzi, exercise room, an observation deck and even a boutique.

There is no better way to experience the diverse wildlife and learn more about the many Amazon rainforest animals than by sailing down the river. Aqua Expedition's ability to travel quietly by water into the remote areas of the Amazon jungle, many of which have seldom been visited by travellers, allows guests to experience the Amazon's animals in a more intimate manner – from the Amazon's dolphins to its fish, monkeys, insects and birdlife.

You will start your luxury cruise floating down the Amazon River in Iquitos, an hour and a half long flight from Lima, Peru. Iquitos can be reached only by air or water and touring the lively city includes many highlights such as a building designed by Gustav Eiffel.

What you see along the Amazon River depends on the length of your stay. The heart of every visit, however, will be Pacaya Samiria Reserve, a protected wildlife area deep within the Amazon rainforest and jungle – a world filled with birds adorned in neon-brilliant colours, playful Amazon monkeys, graceful hawks and herons and millions of butterflies. The highlight of each day's journey on your luxury cruise down the Amazon will be experiencing, on shorter excursions, the pristine wilderness areas teeming with the Amazon's wildlife and amazing plant life, such as the colossal Victoria Regia water lilies. You will have the opportunity to see hundreds of species of Amazon wildlife, including the endangered pink Amazon dolphin, the three toed sloth and perhaps, if you are very lucky a sleek, black jaguar.

You will also encounter—and have the chance to interact with—local people who have been living in villages along the Amazon River for centuries. When the day's sightseeing is over, the comforts of your luxurious floating hotel await you.

"In the end our goal is to take you on a breathtaking Amazon adventure while providing all the comforts – including the level of service that you would find in a five star luxury hotel," says Zugaro. "We are here in one of the last pristine places on earth. Aqua Expeditions will keep it that way." **A**