

# Yachana Lodge



Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excellent educational programme.</li><li>• Strong local community involvement.</li></ul>
Situation	On the banks of the Napo River near the tiny community of Mondaña - two hours by motorized canoe from Coca.
Activities	Guided rainforest hikes, night walks, sunset cruises on the Napo River, community development project visits, practise using blowguns, spears and fishing nets, participation in a cleansing ceremony with a traditional healer.

Yachana Lodge is located on the banks of the Napo River near the tiny community of Mondaña - two hours by motorized canoe from Coca. It is located within over 3000 acres of primary and secondary rainforest of the Gran Sumaco National Park. The lodge was set up by the local community and a non-profit foundation and is a particularly good location to learn about the pressures and opportunities facing the rainforest and its inhabitants.

The lodge consists of 17 rooms with either two or three single beds in each room. The rooms are screened with mosquito netting and have private bathrooms with warm showers. Each room also has a balcony overlooking the Napo River with chairs and hammocks. Solar powered lighting is provided in the rooms and communal areas, with kerosene lanterns along the walkways. Meals are predominantly vegetarian with a mix of local and international dishes. Chicken or fish is occasionally served. The bread is homemade, and the juices freshly squeezed! There is a separate room for relaxing with a small library and a balcony overlooking the Napo River. The lodge bar serves beer, wine, soft drinks and bottled water and a small gift shop sells local handicrafts as well as basic supplies such as insect repellent and toothpaste.

The Gran Sumaco National Park was designated as a protected area by the Ecuadorian Department of Forestry in 1994. The area around the park is referred to as the buffer zone and is intended to be used by the local peoples for the purposes of settlement, development, education, and health. The emphasis of the buffer zone is on raising the awareness of the local population for the need to protect the park and its natural resources. UNESCO designated the National Park as a 'Man and Biosphere Reserve' in 2001.

These Biosphere Reserves are areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems that conserve biodiversity through sustainable management and use. The emphasis at Yachana Lodge is on education and the opportunities for wildlife viewing are relatively limited. Yachana means 'a place of learning' and the lodge program aims to raise awareness about the rainforest and the people who live there. It is a fantastic experience, offering a mix of activities whilst providing the chance to relax and enjoy the rainforest. Activities include rainforest hikes through primary and secondary rainforest accompanied by bilingual and native naturalist guides, night walks and sunset cruises on the Napo River. There is also an opportunity to visit community development projects, practise using blowguns, spears and fishing nets, and participate in a cleansing ceremony with a traditional healer.

