

A scenic view of a wooden house on a lake. The house is built on stilts and has a corrugated metal roof. The water is calm, reflecting the house and the sky. In the foreground, the bow of a boat is visible, with white water splashing. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

E Team Ecuador

User Research

Isabella Martinez | Lilly Kersh | Anna van Eekeren
Daniel Pyszczynski | Keely Testa

Client

Our overarching project goal is to change the narrative of the Amazon from a pristine, untouched Western perspective of nature to one that highlights the ecological legacy and cultural landscape of Amazonia. We aim to foster this hybrid conception of people and ecology by creating a website and Instagram that serve as educational platforms where individuals can interact with various myths and stories to learn about the flora, fauna, people, and places that inhabit and contribute to the rainforest. Through our user research, we seek to gain insight into our target audience's interests, motivations, perceptions, and knowledge regarding Amazonia, enabling us to best develop content, UX/UI, and social outreach.

Research Methods

Since our project focuses heavily on a conceptual understanding of the intersection of culture and nature, we opted for a qualitative research design, as this is more valuable and informative. We initially planned to conduct interviews with the Napo Cultural Center, our host in Ecuador, however, due to international communication speed, we'll conduct these interviews at a later date. Instead, we researched secondary sources such as Google Reviews, TripAdvisor, and travel blogs of the Napo Cultural Center, reviewed transcribed interviews with Ecuadorian locals, and met with our client, Dr. Fausto, to better understand how best to design our website guide and social media.

Target Audience

We believe that our project can benefit tourists, local communities, educators, environmental advocates, and more. Although we didn't conduct a demographic survey, based on our external research, conversation with Dr. Fausto, and transcribed interview observations, our target audience consists of (but isn't limited to): tourists of the Napo Cultural Center and Wildlife Center (families, adventurous people, individuals passionate about ecotourism/sustainability), nature-centric people/those interested in conservation, sustainability, wildlife, and exploration, affluent individuals looking for an exciting vacation, professors/students/researchers, tour operators/guides, and local Ecuadorian youth and communities including Kichwa.

Insight from Secondary Sources

TripAdvisor

Napo Cultural Center



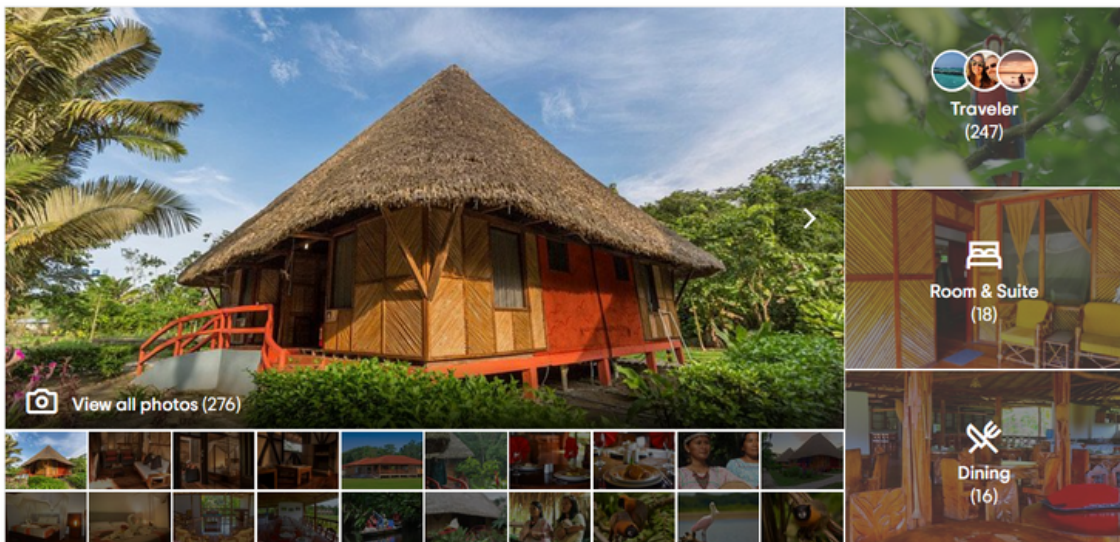
139 reviews

#2 of 12 lodges in Coca

Yasuni National Park, Coca 220150 Ecuador

Write a review

Check availability



4.5 Excellent  139 reviews









#2 of 21 Specialty lodging in Coca

Location  4.8
Cleanliness  4.7
Service  4.9
Value  4.5

Napo Cultural Center offers an unforgettable experience in a first class eco-lodge with direct contact with Añangu Kichwa Community, featuring 16 comfortable and spacious cabins with modern facilities. Flavor traditional cuisine and share ancestral rites like the "guayusada" ceremony and Kichwa Catamaran which emulates old forms of trade in the amazon. One of the most striking and colorful experiences when you visit the Amazon jungle in Ecuador. Near the Napo River, you can find one of the biggest parrot clay licks of Yasuni National Park, a natural formation caused by erosion where parrots, parakeets and macaws go daily to feed with the

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Property amenities




-  Wifi
-  Paid internet
-  Free breakfast
-  Bar / lounge
-  Children Activities (Kid / Family Friendly)
-  Airport transportation
-  Non-smoking hotel
-  Laundry service

[Show more](#)

Room features

-  Safe

Room types

-  Non-smoking rooms
-  Suites
-  Family rooms

See what other travelers are saying

[Learn more](#)

 **Lee B**
5 contributions



Incredible Amazon experience


The Napo Cultural Center is a truly unique place, set on a remote lake deep in the jungle. Getting there requires two hours by motor boat and another hour or more by canoe, but despite the isolated location the community that owns the lodg...

[Read more](#) ▾

Date of stay: **June 2023**

Traveled **with family**

Written September 12, 2023

 **Helen H**
4 contributions



What an amazing experience


We had a fantastic time at the cultural centre. We were made to feel so welcome by the Manager Marcela and her team and through our guides Andres and Maria we saw and learnt so much. They spotted lots of things and gave us...

[Read more](#) ▾

Date of stay: **July 2023**

Traveled **with family**

Written July 6, 2023

 **Tommy from Brid**
11 contributions



Incredible experience and 5 star service

I have just come back from 3 days at the Napo Cultural Centre in January 2020 and it was the best experience of my life. The activities are well planned and organised and incredibly interesting and fun. The experience more than I could have...

[Read more](#) ▾

Date of stay: **January 2020**

Traveled **with friends**

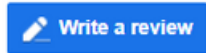
Written February 2, 2020

Overall, the Napo Cultural Center received 4.5/5 stars on TripAdvisor and is ranked #2/12 lodges in Coca, Ecuador. Visitors praised the center for its unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience, clean, high-quality accommodations/amenities, knowledgeable guides, amiable, helpful staff, organized, immersive activities (tours, walks, kayaking, observations), and excellent food/snacks. Guests highlighted the center's balance of engaging with local indigenous communities and nature, emphasizing their enjoyment of learning about local cultures, traditions, and the environment. Guests comprised of families with kids, young adults, and couples and traveled from countries including the Netherlands, the U.K., the U.S., and Ecuador as recently as September 2023.

Google Reviews

Napo Cultural Center - Office

La Niña - Business Office, Yáñez Pinzón N26-131 y, Quito, Ecuador

 Write a review

4.9  10 reviews ⓘ



Erick Steven Ocampo Alarcón

4 reviews

 a month ago

A very relaxing place perfect for sharing with the family 10/10 Highly recommended.


Translated by Google · [See original \(Spanish\)](#)

 Like



Pablo Puga

Local Guide · 36 reviews · 38 photos

 a year ago

Very good place to disconnect from civilization and connect with Nature. Food prepared by a chef in the 3 meals, activities similar to the NWC Napo Wildlife Center .. walks through the forest and bird and monkey observation, hot water, rooms with all the comforts of the city. bring repellent

Translated by Google · [See original \(Spanish\)](#)

 Like

Currently, the Napo Cultural Center has 4.9/5 stars on Google Reviews, though there are only 10 reviews as opposed to 139 on TripAdvisor. As with TripAdvisor, guests commended the dining, hospitality, informative guides, interactivity with nature, local community immersion, and relaxing atmosphere.

Instagram

The screenshot shows the Instagram profile for 'napoculturalcenter'. The profile picture is a circular logo with the word 'Napo' and 'cultural center' below it. The bio reads: 'A wonderful lodge to explore the Amazon rainforest. Discover the wonders of the Yasuni and enjoy wildlife with us 🌿. Sustainable and community owned. 🌿' with a link to 'linktr.ee/nwcnc'. Below the bio are seven category icons: Fauna, Explore, Culture, Kichwa Com..., Birdlife, Facilities, and #Irresistibly. The main feed shows a grid of six posts: a smiling child, a close-up of a snake, people toasting beer, a parrot, a frog, and a sloth.

napoculturalcenter [Follow](#) [Message](#) [🔍](#) [⋮](#)

404 posts 4,910 followers 85 following

Napo Cultural Center

A wonderful lodge to explore the Amazon rainforest. Discover the wonders of the Yasuni and enjoy wildlife with us 🌿. Sustainable and community owned. 🌿
linktr.ee/nwcnc

Fauna Explore Culture Kichwa Com... Birdlife Facilities #Irresistibly

POSTS REELS TAGGED

IT WAS A DREAM COME TRUE TO VISIT THE AMAZON BASIN AND SEE SO MUCH WILDLIFE...
we saw hundreds of monkeys and birds, playful river otters munching on piranhas, and even a giant tarantula. We loved spending time with our guide Vera and the people in our tour group, who were from all over the world. ★★★★★

The Napo Cultural Center Instagram has 403 posts and 4,909 followers. The account features a variety of posts and videos about wildlife, the environment, people/culture, accommodations/tours, and reviews. The bio includes a linktree with links to the Napo website and Wildlife Center and effective highlights that showcase aspects of the center such as fauna, exploration, culture, Kichwa community, birds, and facilities.

Napo Cultural Center review: 4 days at an Amazon Lodge in Ecuador

19th January 2023

This post may contain affiliate links. It means that if you buy something through one of these links, we might get a small commission at no extra cost to you. Affiliate commission helps us keep this travel blog running.

This post's overview: [\[hide\]](#)

- [1 Why we picked Napo Cultural Center \(out of all lodges in Ecuador\)](#)
- [2 Booking your stay at Napo Cultural Center](#)
- [3 Getting to Napo Cultural Center](#)
- [4 Arrival at Napo Cultural Center](#)
- [5 Napo Cultural Center Accommodation – Room review](#)
- [6 Food review at Napo Cultural Center](#)
- [7 Our itinerary for 4 days / 3 nights at the Amazon Lodge in Ecuador – Napo Cultural Center](#)
 - [7.1 Activities you can expect to take part in at Napo Cultural Center:](#)
- [8 What to pack for an Amazon lodge stay in Ecuador?](#)
- [9 Summary of 4 days at an Amazon Lodge in Ecuador – Napo Cultural Center review](#)
- [10 Some other posts you might like:](#)

SEPTEMBER 12, 2022 BY LISA ROBERTI

Napo Cultural Center Ecuador Amazon Lodge Review

I'm not sure exactly what I was thinking when I signed up for an extension to my Galapagos trip to go to the Ecuadorian Amazon. It sounded exotic and colorful and fascinating and so I just signed up....then the realization - massive heat, humidity, huge spiders, snakes, and other poisonous critters lived in the amazon...I was a bit nervous to take on this particular endeavor.

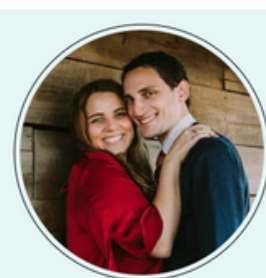
It was a bit of an adventure that is for sure! I did this trip as part of a group trip with Aaron's Tours. It was an exploratory add-on after Galapagos with a few days in Quito in between.

The trip started with a 6:00 am breakfast and a 7:00 am departure for the Quito airport. It was a quick 30 minute flight to Coca.

The travel blogs highlighted similar features as the review sites, depicting in-depth breakdowns of each element (arrival, facility, food, activities, community, flora/fauna, etc.) via day-to-day experiences. Interestingly, Lisa M. Roberti seemed to have a very Western-centric perception of the Amazon, citing “It sounded exotic and colorful and fascinating and so I just signed up.” This preconceived notion of the rainforest as pristine, untouched nature is exactly the bias we’re trying to dispel, stressing the significance of our project.

Our Review Of The Napo Wildlife Center in Yasuni National Park

Yasuni National Park is one of the most biodiverse places in the world and a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve covering more than 9,823 square kilometers of Amazon rainforest. Yasuni is located between the Napo and Curaray rivers within the Napo forest eco-region. Yasuni National Park features 150 amphibian species, 121 reptile species, 382 fish species, 596 bird species, 117 bat species, 100,000 insect species, and 4,000 vascular plants.



Stevie and Jaz

Hello travelers! We are Steven and Jazmin, an American Jew and a Lebanese Ecuadorian. We have traveled to over 80 countries sharing our experiences with you. We promote a sustainable and inclusive form of tourism.

[Read more »](#)

Travel Magazine



Share    

There is no human feat capable of competing with the power of nature at its most diverse. This deep knowledge has driven the Añangu community to create an Amazonian adventure unparalleled in the world. This deep knowledge –at various levels– has inspired this native group of the remote Ecuadorian Amazon to show the world the importance of preserving their spectacular jungle realm. A knowledge of deep-rooted ancestral heritage. A knowledge of incomparable nature and a conviction that there is no place in the world as rich in experiences as their own backyard, on the banks of the Napo River, within the Yasuní National Park.

ARTÍCULOS RELACIONADOS

COMMUNITY [JUNE 21, 2023](#)

Cofanes: Keepers of the Sacred Ayahuasca

Ñan Magazine, a travel magazine that promotes Ecuadorian culture and tourism, featured the Napo Wildlife Center & Cultural Center in a glamorized, Western marketing approach, with wording that feels almost colonial and artificial. This phrasing is a strong example of how not to describe our project, specifically the culture and stories.

IT ALL STARTS THE MOMENT YOU GET OFF THE PLANE

Napo Wildlife Center is Añangu's star project. The community has created, with great tenacity, conviction and effort one of the most special projects within tropical rainforest in the world today. When you find such astounding infrastructure in the midst of unfathomable stretches of lush vegetation, you wonder just how –with what machinery (helicopters, river barges...)– did this miniscule village actually manage to transport everything out here... The amazing response you hear from the native guides is that it was all brought in the very same traditional canoes that takes us gently, through small streams, to the lodge... Each wooden beam, each refrigerator, each metal rod to create cabins, kitchens, the skyscraping observation towers...

These are details that make a world of a difference in a long-lost paradise like this. Details in logistics, organization, just plain old manual labor (epic manual labor!) with few possible comparisons not only within the country, but the world. Details that one notices immediately, every step of the way.

Transcribed Interviews

The interviews featured individuals from Ecuadorian indigenous communities including Kichwa and Quijos as well as tour guides/managers. Common threads among native interviewees included the evangelization of indigenous people (most are Christian or Catholic), the significance of plants and animals for mythology, traditional medicine, and culture (e.g. the hummingbird, armadillo, anaconda, the paja plant, the “Chuchubacho” medicinal tree or cassava; animals are sacred to many communities and the people don’t hunt for sport, only necessity; most myths feature a delicate relationship between nature and humans), the importance of language/phrases for naming places (e.g. “Playas de Cuyabeno,” the name for the Kichwa community stems from the sand, ‘playas,’ of the river, ‘cuyabeno.”), exploitation of environmental resources/people from oil companies, and the societal role of women (e.g. women are in charge of creating ceramic pieces and run the Napo Cultural Center).

Meeting with Dr. Fausto

In our conversation with Dr. Fausto, Dr. Fausto clarified our project goal - changing the narrative of the Amazon from pristine nature to an ecological legacy perspective - and emphasized that in addition to educating tourists, the center promotes community-based tourism for local Ecuadorian youth. He explained that because of the nature of the facility, most people who visit the center are affluent U.S., European, and Chinese eco-tourists who are mostly interested in the flora and fauna, a notion our project aims to combat. Dr. Fausto stressed that we should discuss the broader impact of the NSF grant and its international reach (worldwide collaborations from scientists/scholars) and increase our educational sphere to include local communities.

Future Napo Cultural Center Interview Questions

These are the questions we will ask Napo Cultural Center representatives/employees once we schedule a meeting:

- 1. What do you think people should know about the Amazon?*
- 2. How does understanding the ecological legacy/cultural aspects of the Amazon help with its preservation? How does it help the local communities as well?*
- 3. What have you found is the most effective way to teach people about the cultural aspect of the Amazon?*
- 4. Is there a specific story/myth/legend that you love to share about the Amazon?*
- 5. What is the biggest takeaway about the Amazon that tourists miss and do not learn before they leave?*
- 6. What obstacles do you face when trying to communicate to tourists about the rainforest?*
- 7. What can we implement in our project that you would find helpful?*

Closing Observations and Future Plans

Through our user research, we gained insight into our target audience's interests and knowledge regarding the Amazon, prompting us to restructure our website and social media design. Although we were unable to contact the Napo Cultural Center directly and conduct interviews, our secondary sources proved sufficient in providing us with valuable information. Our user research helped us forgo our initial QR code nature trail plan (series of flora and fauna QR codes displayed on a nature trail), as we learned that visitors attend guided tours with experienced, highly knowledgeable tour guides who inform guests and answer questions, rendering QR codes ineffective and repetitive. Instead, we decided to center our website around the myths and legends of Amazonia, as these narratives hold significance to indigenous communities. Based on our conversation with Dr. Fausto, our project will be applicable to tourists, educators, social media users such as Gen Z students interested in sustainability and culture or just individuals scrolling on Instagram or TikTok, and local Ecuadorian communities. By incorporating our user research into our project development, we strive to create an engaging, informative website and social media platforms that highlight the stories and people of Amazonia, empowering local communities and tourists alike to view the Amazon as a fusion of nature and culture.