



ReeBee's Travel Journal

"Angel Falls"

Angel Falls, Amazon Trip

This past week will be a hard one for me to top and the memory of it is still fresh in my mind. As I sit here in the comfort of my home, I find it difficult to believe that this past week I was actually in the equatorial Ghana area of the Amazon Jungle region of South America and actually standing under Angel Falls, the highest waterfall in vertical drop (3,120 feet) in the world.

My trip began with a flight to Miami from Chicago and then on to Venezuela, South America, where I then transferred to a twin-engine prop aircraft that flew me another 450 miles South in to the Amazon and a small Indian village of about 200 residents that is called Caledonia. From here I joined a small group of nine others of like mind and hired an Indian with a dugout canoe to take us the additional 45 miles up river to the site of the world famous falls that were discovered by an American Bush Pilot named Jimmy Angle in 1934. We traveled for two days in and two days back portaging at steep rapids and riding the ones that we could. At night we slept in hammocks in a crude shack that was our base camp on the way to and from. There were wild monkeys, Parrots and all the night sounds that you would expect in a Tarzan movie. It was very hot, humid and yet very enjoyable since it was 100% different than anything I was used to. My guide was called Christian and he was perfect fit for the part looking like he could have played a warrior in Last of the Mohicans, which incidentally was partially filmed at this spot. There is a scene where the Indians walk completely across a river by going under waterfalls and that is one of the things we all did as well at the same spot!

When you finally see the first glimpse of Angel Falls it is hard to believe as it seems to come right out of the sky and clouds. In fact there are clouds that hang below it most of the time. After going as far as we could by canoe, we then hiked for two additional hours through the jungle to the base of the falls which was breathtaking and spectacular. We were able to swim in a deep pool that has formed at the base and feel the water come down from over 3000 feet above. To put this in perspective, the Sears Tower is less than half this height and Niagara Falls are only 1/16th this height! We then enjoyed this setting for several hours and started our trip back to the river and our canoe. Another night at base camp and then down stream to the starting point for a roundtrip of 90 miles. When I got back to Caledonia, I found out that you could hire a local pilot to take you to the falls by plane for \$50.00 so I decided that this was a once in a lifetime chance and did the trip which took about an hour. I am glad that I did as it gave me a chance to see the source of the falls from the top and also the still remaining crash-landed plane of Jimmy Angel that sits exactly where it first landed 58 years ago.

I knew this trip was one that would attract a certain hard core breed and I asked Christian, our Indian guide who else had been on this trip that he may be able to remember that was well known. He responded that Steven Spielberg, John Claude Van Dam, Robert Dinaro and Sean Connerly had all been on this same excursion with him to name a few. Incidentally the last was there when he filmed "Medicine Man" which was filmed at this location.

I highly recommend this trip for anyone that likes the outdoors, out of the ordinary and doesn't mind getting wet quite a lot without modern conveniences like hot water, ice boxes and electricity. I will decide in a couple of days where to go next and report back if it turns out to be worthwhile.

Jeff Wolfe - AKA ReeBee