

**The Best of Ecuador  
9 days/8 nights  
Quito, Otavalo, Cotacachi, Magdalena Community, Ibarra, Salinas, Baños, Riobamba, Cuenca,  
Guayaquil  
Ecotourism, Culture, History, Experiential Tourism**

**Quito**

*Situated in a circle of mountainous peaks of the Andes, Quito has one of the most magnificent settings in the world. Its colonial old town was the first location in the world to be designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Altogether the city has to offer 86 churches and monasteries of the 16th and 17th centuries. Due to its beautiful churches and monasteries, Quito is known as the "Convent of America". This attractive city is located only 13, 7 miles away from the "Middle of the World", the Equatorial Line.*

**Riobamba**

*Riobamba is a city in the Andean highlands in the center of Ecuador. It is known locally as the "Sultan of the Andes". Riobamba sits in a valley surrounded by several large hills and snowcapped mountains.*

**Cuenca**

*The city of Cuenca is widely regarded as the most European city in the country of Ecuador due to its highly 16th and 17th century era Spanish colonial architecture resembling to cities and architecture throughout Spain. It is located in the highlands of Ecuador at about 8,200 feet above sea level, with an urban population of approximately 400,000. The center of the city is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Trust site due to its many historical buildings. Cuenca is well known for its stunning architecture, tourist attractions, charming boutique hotels and night activities.*

**Guayaquil**

*Ecuador's largest city Guayaquil is the industrial and commercial center of the country and home to over 2, 5 million people. It is situated on the western banks of the Río Guayas, about 35 miles from its outflow into the Gulf of Guayaquil. The Pacific Ocean enters through the gulf of Guayaquil into the city's harbor. Guayaquil's port is the main door to 90% of all Ecuadorian imports as well and half of its exports. The climate is hot in the first semester of the year and a nice cool breeze blows the rest of it. In the recent past the city has seen some great changes with the construction of a beautiful riverfront promenade: Malecón 2000, green areas, and modern shopping arcades that attract tourism from inside and outside the country.*

**Day 1: Quito**

Welcome to Quito! Upon arrival you'll be transferred to your hotel. Remainder of the day at leisure to explore the city on own.

**Day 2: Quito (Colonial City & Middle of the World)**

Your half day tour will take you through five centuries of history ranging from modern quarters to varied colonial facades on churches and private residences decorated and balconies built hundreds of years ago. See the gothic Basilica of Jesus' Heart, the Independence Square developed during the past five centuries and flanked by the Presidential and the Archbishop's palaces dated back to XVII and XIX centuries. Walk through the charming colonial quarter towards the Metropolitan Cathedral with excellent samples of the Spanish renaissance. Visit the Jesuit temple, a perfect example of baroque art considered the jewel of the crown of the colonial architecture in Quito, then continue to the Plaza of San Francisco, which displays a rich sample of artistic and cultural heritage. Your tour ends with a visit the "Middle of the world" monument situated at 0°0'0" latitude. [B]

**Day 3: Quito, Otavalo, Karanki Magdalena Community**

On the approximately two-hour panoramic bus ride to famous Otavalo market, you will visit the small town of Calderón, where the typical miniature bread figurines are made, admire the arid and fertile Guayllabamba gorge and village, and pass the Lago San Pablo with its great background – the rock

massive Taita Imbabura. Once in Otavalo discover the worldwide known Indian handcraft market. The local Indians have achieved economic prosperity as a result of their skill in weaving a tremendous variety of designs in belts, tapestries, ponchos and other clothing items. It's time to test your bargaining skills! Your next stop is in Cotacachi, a crater lake at an altitude of 3,000m. The small town Cotacachi itself is Ecuador's center of leather works. Here you can stroll through the small streets choosing one of the various shops as your favourite. In the afternoon head to the Karanki Magdalena Community Lodge. Overnight at the Indigenous Community of Magdalena, at the slopes of the Imbabura Volcano near Otavalo. Home of Atahualpa, the last of the Inca Emperors, Karanki Magdalena is at approximately 9,842 feet above sea level with a privileged location surrounded by valleys and lagoons. Enjoy an overnight in 6 family homes: Single, Double, Triple rooms with private bathroom, cold and hot water, hairdryer, biodegradable soap and shampoo, fireplace, board games. [B/D]

#### Day 4: Karanki Magdalena Community Train Ride, Salinas, Quito

Enjoy a morning activity in the countryside. You can go horseback riding, mountain biking or hiking. Then drive to Ibarra and catch the "Liberty Train". The landscapes provide a magical setting as you pass through the tunnels, cross bridges spanning canyons and gullies, and admire a unique biodiversity. Then arrive in the Afro-Ecuadorian community of Salinas, well known for its agricultural activities. From here you will go back to Quito. [B/L]

#### Day 5: Quito, Cotopaxi, Baños, Riobamba

Leave Quito and cross the famous Avenue of the Volcanoes. On the way to Baños admire highest active volcano on Earth, Cotopaxi. Baños is an idyllic town featuring green mountains, waterfalls and thermal hot springs. The journey takes you through lush vegetation and some of the finest waterfalls of Ecuador. Then drive south to Riobamba for overnight. [B]

#### Day 6: Riobamba, Devil's Nose Train Ride, Ingapirca Ruins, Cuenca

Start your day with a ride through some of the most picturesque indigenous areas of the country. This is an enjoyable ride through the countryside. The campesinos wearing the traditional clothes will often wave as the train goes by. Then continue your way south to the interesting Ingapirca Ruins: Located about 60 miles from Cuenca, set in the green mountains, the ruins of Ingapirca are the best-preserved remains of the Inca culture in Ecuador. Walk around and learn about the area before you continue your journey to Cuenca [B/P]

#### Day 7: Cuenca

Stroll through the historical buildings, located along the Tomebamba River. Visit the "Todos los Santos" ruins, evidence of the Spanish and Inca civilizations in the area. Then go to the flowers market and the main square with the old Cathedral that houses a Museum for Religious Art and the new Cathedral, which took almost 1 century to be completed. Your tour ends at the Panama hat factory, a typical product of Ecuador. Afternoon at leisure to enjoy Cuenca at your pace. [B]

#### Day 8: Cuenca, Guayaquil

Today, you depart Cuenca for a 4 hour ride to Guayaquil. En route you will see El Cajas National Park known for its beautiful landscapes, trails through evergreen cloud forests and more than 200 lakes, such as Laguna Toreadora. After lunch (not included) drive to Guayaquil for overnight. [B]



**Day 9: Guayaquil, USA**

At agreed time transfer to the airport to board your flight home or to your next destination. [B]

[B] = Breakfast | [B/P] = Breakfast and Box Lunch | [B/D] = Breakfast and Dinner

**Your Tour includes:**

- Transfers between airports and hotels
- Accommodation in standard rooms at hotels of preference for 8 nights:
  - Quito 3 - nights
  - Karanki at Magdalena Community - 1 night
  - Riobamba - 1 night
  - Cuenca 2 - nights
  - Guayaquil 1 – night
- Meals
  - Daily breakfast
  - 1 Box Lunch
  - 1 Dinner
- Sightseeing tours and visits as described

- Tickets to attractions mentioned
- Local English-speaking guides
- All hotel taxes
- \* Transfers and tours are on shared basis

**Tour does not include:**

- International or domestic air tickets
- Taxes and surcharges related to airline tickets
- Early check-in or late check-out at hotels
- Services and food not listed in the itinerary
- Beverages during the meals
- Hotel extras, and personal expenses.
- Tips for guides, drivers and in restaurants

**Hotels in your Tour:**

Location	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
<b>First Class</b>		
Quito	Mercure	4
Magdalena	Home Stay Magdalena	4
Riobamba	Abraspungo	4.5
Cuenca	Carvallo	5
Guayaquil	Oro Verde	4.5
<b>Deluxe</b>		
Quito	Swissotel	4.5
Magdalena	Home Stay Magdalena	4
Riobamba	La Andaluza	5
Cuenca	La Mansión de Alcazar	4.5
Guayaquil	Hilton Colon	4

All hotels are subject to confirmation at the time of booking

**Tour Prices:**

Category	From
First Class	\$1,795
Deluxe	\$2,325

Rates are minimum per person sharing a room and may change without notice.  
 Rates may change depending on the date of travel  
 Prices for single room or for 3 passengers sharing a room are available on request  
 Valid through December 20th 2019. Not valid for Holidays and big Conventions.  
 Other blackout dates may apply.

**Tour Code:** EQ01UIO19IDM