

**Discover the Andes  
9 days – 8 nights  
Quito, Otavalo, Cotacachi, Cotopaxi, El Pedregal, Saquisilí, Quilotoa Lake, Salcedo, Salacasa  
Discovery, Nature, Culture, History**

**This program is fully customizable and may be operated for individuals, pods and groups**

*Experiencing the many cultures of Ecuador is a great way to support the local communities. This tour and activities within the itinerary provide the most stunning and awe-inspiring connections with Ecuador's colorful kaleidoscope of traditions and customs. As you experience each new day, you'll find yourself connecting to the local heritage, tasting new foods prepared in the original ancestral way as hundreds of years before, learning about the farming methods that produce these foods, and witnessing the vibrant costume of the different indigenous cultures found in various regions of the country.*

**Day 1: Quito, Otavalo**

After you clear customs and immigration at Quito's airport you'll be met by your guide who will drive you to Otavalo for check-in, dinner and overnight at the hotel. [D]

**Note:** *Guests in deluxe hotels will stay in Zuleta*

**Day 2: Otavalo (Cotacachi, Quicocha Lagoon)**

Otavalo's famous indigenous daily market is an ancient tradition and cultural exchange site for the community. Then, head to the spectacular Quicocha Lagoon within the Cotacachi-Cayapas Ecological Reserve. There is time for a short hike to fully experience the diversity of the lagoon, take photos and, on clear days, appreciate the views including the impressive Imbabura Volcano and even the peak of Cayambe in the distance. After the visit continue to Cotacachi, famous for its leather products such as shoes, purses, coats and belts. Then, we head to restaurant, to learn the indigenous methods of thanking and appreciating the foods that are on the table and the precious moments of sitting with loved ones while enjoying ancestral practices and flavors. Otavalo's rich gastronomic scene combines the diverse foods grown in the highland region with the ancestral knowledge of indigenous Andean culture. [B/L]

**Day 3: Otavalo, Ilumán, Indigenous villages, Quito**

This morning, we visit the small crafts town of Ilumán, near Otavalo, to experience a traditional indigenous cleansing ceremony where traditional medicine plays an important role. Many people know South America's traditional healers as 'shamans', but the Ilumán community prefers the word 'yachak' that means 'the one who knows' in the native Kichwa language. First, you learn about the yachak's role in a community and how deeply he is respected, after which you go to the place where the ceremony will take place. The yachak will start the ritual by using medicinal plants, like nettle and 'chilca', mixed with water. Subsequently, you will be invited to enter a small pond to get rid of the bad energies and open up for positive ones. After the cleansing, visit other indigenous villages in the Northern area of the highlands to learn about different kinds of artisanship such as mats made of totora reeds, musical instruments, weavings made from sheep wool and jewelry made of seeds. The tour also includes a visit to the Peguche waterfall, a ritual site known for its healing powers and where locals sometimes bathe to prepare for spiritual festivals such as Inti Raymi. Have lunch near the area or in a local community and continue to Quito for overnight [B/L]

**Day 4: Quito (Middle of the World)**

Today you will head north of the city to visit the Middle of the World Monument marking the Equator line. The Intiñan Museum is an interactive museum featuring outdoor exhibits of astronomical geography and explanations of the importance of Ecuador's geographical location. Oswaldo Guayasamín was a talented painter and sculptor who dedicated his life to works of art of Kichwa and Mestizo heritage. In 2002, three years after his death, Guayasamín's masterpiece, La Capilla del Hombre ("The Chapel of Man"), was completed and opened to the public. The Chapel is meant to

document not only man's cruelty to one another, but also to inspire the potential for greatness within humanity. It is located in front of Guayasamín's home overlooking Quito. Rest of the day at leisure. [B]

### **Day 5: Quito (Rumipanga Ruins, Cooking Class)**

This morning, take the Teleferico (cable car) for a thrilling visit up to high slopes of the Pichincha Volcano. From there you have an amazing panoramic view of the city. After the descent, stop at the Rumipamba archaeological site, re-discovered by archaeologists in the 1980s, when they found remains of a Quito community. The Quitus were the pre-Incan inhabitants of the area where Quito is located today. This interesting park includes ancient trails, walls, canals and the foundations of Quito dwellings. It is an interesting place to learn about the ancient cultures of the area while enjoying a little oasis in the bustling Ecuadorian capital. The day continues with a historical city tour of Quito to explore the best preserved colonial center of all of South America and one of the first World Heritage Sites. The first stop is the Basilica del Voto Nacional. Then, continue to the Plaza Grande, or Independence Square to admire the historical buildings surrounding the square and its important history! Located here is the Presidential Palace, the Catholic Cathedral, and the Archbishop's Palace. After, see Church of San Francisco de Quito and walk through the lively colonial streets of the old town to visit other historical highlights such as the Panecillo, from where you will have an amazing 360-degree view over the city. One of the highlights of the city tour is the visit to La Compañía Church, a Baroque masterpiece, whose facade is made of volcanic stone and the interior is all covered with gold. In the late 19th century, "La Ronda" became known as a neighborhood where artists, writers, bohemians, poets would meet. Nowadays, it is a beautiful and vivacious street lit with lanterns and decorated with floral balconies; offering a romantic and lively ambiance. Then, visit the traditional San Francisco Market, the first of all Quito markets, opened in 1893. We'll end the tour at the Altamira Experience, located in the heart of the historic center of Quito in a renovated colonial house. The restaurant offers an authentic and interactive cooking class where you will be the protagonist. Become a chef, prepare your own dishes and delight yourself with them; a true experience to share with your partner, family or friends! [B/D]

**Note:** *The rose plantation visit is subject to operational days  
Rumipamba is closed Mondays and Tuesdays.*

### **Day 6: Quito, Condor Machay, Cotopaxi, Limpiopungo, El Pedregal (Cotopaxi Region)**

Today's first destination is the Condor Machay Waterfall a natural beauty whose name in Quichua means "Nest of the Condor". Indeed, if you are lucky, you will be able to find condors flying overhead! Next, continue to one of the highest active volcanoes in the world and one of Ecuador's most popular highlights: the elegant Cotopaxi Volcano, with an altitude of 19,630 feet above sea level. This impressive, snow-capped volcano stands proudly in the middle of the beautiful national park that bears its name. Upon arrival at the entrance of the Cotopaxi National Park, your guide will explain about the unique flora and fauna of the area, and about the history of the volcano. Subsequently, you'll continue to the Limpiopungo Lake (altitude: 12,630 feet), to enjoy a hike through the stunning "paramo", or grassland, landscape where you can see hummingbirds, wild horses, and other wildlife. All this time, the imposing Cotopaxi Volcano is just a few steps away and on a clear day you can admire its full glory. In the afternoon you head to your hotel located in Pedregal, close to the Cotopaxi National Park. [B/D]

### **Day 7: Cotopaxi Region**

Spend a relaxing day in this comfortable place with a rustic touch for a real Andean experience. Elect to just rest and relax admiring the exceptional surroundings or opt for one of the available activities like horseback riding, high ropes course, mountain biking, Hiking and nature walks or perfect your gastronomic skills by attending a cooking class. Alternatively, depending on which hacienda you're staying, you may want to spend a few hours in the spa refreshing your skin and relaxing your muscles. All meals are included so you don't have to worry about it. [B/L/D]

### **Day 8: Cotopaxi Region, Saquisilí, Quilotoa, Tigua, Baños**

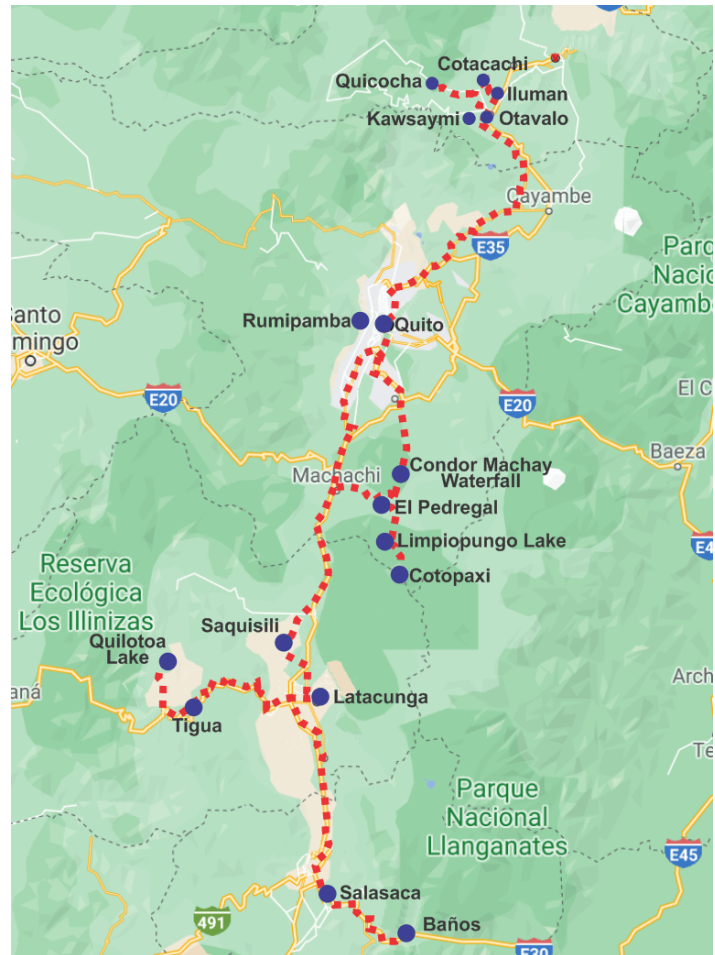
You will get up early to visit the Nevado Rose Plantation, a family owned company now focused on producing the best quality, high-altitude roses in the country. Continue to Saquisilí, a small town with

a huge market, where locals of the entire region come together, not only to sell or buy products, but to attend this social event, where they also enjoy their local cuisine and converse. Then, continue to the beautiful Quilotoa Crater Lake on top of the extinct Quilotoa volcano; it is one of the most spectacular places in the Ecuadorian Sierra region. Its name comes from two Kichwa words "Quiru" which means "tooth", and "Toa" which means queen, due to the shape of the lagoon. The mineral-rich waters of the lake are an emerald green, which can vary to bluish green or almost yellow depending on the season. You can hike down to the lagoon and then back to the top of the crater (you can either hike or rent a mule). On the way back, we'll stop in a little village that is famous for its local paintings and masks, called Tigua to attend a painting demonstration. Finally we reach Baños to check-in and have dinner at the hotel. [B/D]

**Day 9: Baños, Salasaca, Quito, USA**

After the visit we drive to Salasaca is located in the center of Ecuador, a region where the native Salasacas speak Spanish and Kichwa. Their main economic activities are agriculture, livestock and handicrafts such as tapestries, which are woven by hand using antique looms and feature designs depicting mostly different aspects of their daily lives. There is a market in the central plaza of Salasaca called "Plaza of the Arts". After lunch at a local restaurant, we drive back to Quito It's time to say goodbye so, we drive to Quito's airport to board your flight back home. [B/L]

**Note:** Due to logistics and driving distance Baños-Quito , an evening or night flight is advisable



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

**Your Tour includes:**

- Arrival and departure transfers
- 8 nights accommodation:
  - Otavalo 2 nights
  - Quito 3 nights
  - El Pedregal 2 nights
  - Salcedo 1 night
- Meals:
  - Breakfast daily
  - 4 lunches
  - 5 dinners
- Otavalo Market
- Cotacachi leather
- Illumán cleansing ceremony
- Highlands indigenous villages
- Quicocha Lagoon
- Tour of Quito
- Cable ride to Pichincha Volcano
- Cooking Class
- Condor Machay Waterfall
- Cotopaxi Volcano
- Limpiopungo Lake
- Quilotoa Crater Lake
- Painting demonstration in Tigua
- Nevado Rose Plantation
- Salasaca weaving
- Rumipamba archaeological site
- English-speaking guide
- Transportation by deluxe vehicle
- Entrance fees
- All local taxes

**Tour does not include:**

- Airfare taxes and fees
- Early check-in or late checkout at hotels
- Expenses of personal nature
- Travel insurance
- Optional tours
- Any services not included in the tour
- Tips to restaurants, guides and drivers

**Hotels in your Tour:**

City	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
<b>Superior Tourist Class</b>		
Otavalo	Hotel Las Palmeras Inn	4.5
Quito	Hotel Casa Gardenia	4.5
El Pedregal	Hacienda El Porvenir	4.5
Baños	La Floresta	
<b>First Class</b>		
Otavalo	Hotel Otavalo	5
Quito	Hotel Mama Cuchara	4.5
El Pedregal	Hato Verde	
Baños	Sangay Spa Hotel	4
<b>Deluxe</b>		
Zuleta	Hacienda Zuleta	5
Quito	Hotel Casa Gangotena	5
Cotopaxi	Hacienda San Agustin de Callo	4.5
Baños	Samari Spa Resort	4.5

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

**Tour Prices:**

No. in Party	2-3 Pax	4-5 Pax	6-7 Pax
<b>Superior Tourist</b>			
Double	\$2,999	\$2,575	\$2,369
Single	\$3,455	\$3,029	\$2,819
<b>First Class</b>			
Double	\$3,149	\$2,719	\$2,515
Single	\$3,799	\$3,375	\$3,169
<b>Deluxe</b>			
Double	\$4,909	\$4,509	\$4,275
Single	\$6,869	\$6,469	\$6,235

Rates are minimum per person sharing a room and may change without notice.

Rates may change depending on the date of travel.

These programs can be customized for individuals and for groups

Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

• **Airfare**

We also be glad to add the necessary airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares

• **Program**

You may add or remove;

- Trip days
- Cities and sites
- Meals

• **Other options**

- The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available
- If you prefer deluxe services we may operate this program including private driver, private guide and concierge service.

- **Quotation**

Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

Prices are minimum for low season. Please call for other periods

**Tour Code:** EC01UIO21PU

**Options:**

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for individuals, families and groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.
- Car can be upgraded upon request

**Group Quotations**

- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the land journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.

We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.