

The Nature of Ecuador

14 days – 13 nights

Quito, Coca, Añangu, Otavalo, Indigenous Villages, Cuicocha Lagoon, Yunguilla, Cotopaxi National Park, Quilotoa, Salasaca, Riobamba, Chimborazo Reserve, Guamote, Cuenca, Ingapirca, Guayaquil
Eco-Tourism, Adventure, Discovery, Culture, Relaxation

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

Ecuador is a land of contrasts. Less known to tourists than neighboring countries such as Peru or Colombia, it conceals many wonders to explore. Cut in two by the Andes, the country has very different ecosystems to which the inhabitants have had to adapt. From the Pacific Rim and the Galapagos Islands to the Amazon rainforest, passing peaks over 20,000 feet, Ecuador does not fail to impress the traveler. Discover this small South American country with deep-rooted traditions, and let yourself be amazed by its breathtaking landscapes.

Day 1: Quito

You will have a private transfer from the airport to your selected hotel in the neighboring town of Tababela for your overnight stay.

Note; *It's best to arrive on a Sunday to have the opportunity to visit the Guamote market on Day 12*

Day 2: Quito, Coca, Añangu Community

Morning transfer to Quito airport to board your 35-minute flight to Puerto Francisco de Orellana, also known as "Coca", in the Amazon basin. You'll be met and welcomed by a member of Napo Cultural Center who will transport you to Napo's river port for a 2-hour motorized canoe ride to the lodge. During the ride, you can enjoy a boxed lunch prepared by the lodge. After a warm welcome, attend a short briefing followed by a tour of the social areas and your accommodations. Time to rest and relax until a wonderful dinner in the lodge's charming restaurant. In the evening you will have an opportunity to visit the observation tower looking over the green canopy of the jungle forest searching for native bird species watching an amazing sunset over Yasuni National Park in the distance. [B/L/D]

Day 3: Añangu Community

The adventure begins early at Napo Cultural Center! On the second day of your jungle adventure, you may experience one of the Amazon's most incredible and natural spectacles: Parrots and parakeets creating a colorful show as they gather to lick clay on the Napo River. At another location you may watch closer over 11 different species of parrots, parakeets, and macaws. With fortune on your side you can also see different mammals such as tapirs, howler monkeys, or peccaries, more commonly known as wild boars. Later in the day, you will participate in an intercultural exposition at the interpretational center "Kuri Muyu" - meaning seed of gold in the Amazon language of Kichwa. The program is operated by the women from the community, also known as "mamakuna". Here you can learn about the Kichwa culture, artisanal projects, customs, and traditional use of the natural resources straight from the community's indigenous peoples. After lunch, paddle around the "Añangu creek", a black water ecosystem inhabited by monkeys jumping from tree to tree, caiman and sometimes even giant river otters trying to catch fish. Return to the lodge with some time to relax. After dinner, head out for a night excursion, to observe Amazon's wildlife and make interesting discoveries looking for different types of insects, reptiles, and even nocturnal mammals such as monkeys. Return to the lodge for overnight. [B/L/D]

Note: *Amazon itineraries are subject to change without previous notice due to operational purposes, weather conditions, guide decisions based on safety, and for your own comfort. This itinerary is an example only and the order of the activities may change.*

Day 4: Añangu Community, Coca, Quito, Otavalo

To have an even more memorable experience, you have an opportunity to wake up before the sun and participate in a ritual when the Kichwa families share the sacred Wayusa. The ritual has become a form

of passing down ancestral knowledge to each new generation. They will share with you native stories and legends interpreted by a wise woman. Surely an amazing and mystical experience! Return to the lodge for breakfast while staff members gather your belongings for the trip back up the Napo River to the Coca pier from where you'll be transferred to the airport for your flight back to Quito. At Quito's Tababela airport you'll be met for a 90-minute drive to your hotel in Otavalo for overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 5: Otavalo, Ibarra, Cotacachi

You will first visit the town of Otavalo, famous for its indigenous market, an ancient tradition and cultural exchange site among the Otavalo community. Then, visit the peaceful town of Cotacachi, famous for its leather products such as shoes, purses, coats and belts. The Huarmi Maqui Artisan Workshop is a place where you will enjoy the tradition and culture offered by the Kichwa communities in the northern areas of Ecuador. The workshop offers unique and original products made by local artisans on the processes of wool and weaving handlooms, dyeing with natural materials and the use of native plants. At the Kawsaymi indigenous restaurant in Otavalo you'll learn their methods of preparing their meals. Otavalo's rich gastronomic scene combines the diverse foods grown in the highland region with the ancestral knowledge of indigenous Andean culture. After lunch we drive to San Antonio de Ibarra, located in the beautiful Imbabura Province, also known as La Ciudad Blanca or "White City", where talented artisans create beautiful pieces of art from natural resources reflecting surrounding landscapes of great scenic beauty. The tour includes visiting local artisan workshops where you can admire and buy beautiful wood crafts. Return to the hotel in Cotacachi for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 6: Cotacachi, Cuicocha Lagoon, Otavalo, Quito

Today, you'll visit several indigenous villages in the Northern area of the highlands. Here you can learn about different kinds of artisanship and how they are made, like 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. Finally, you will head to the spectacular Cuicocha 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 towards Otavalo and the impressive Imbabura Volcano or even the peak of Cayambe in the distance. [B/L]

Day 7: Quito (Middle of the World)

During the historical city tour of Quito, you will explore the best-preserved colonial center of all of South America. As one of the first World Heritage Sites, it will be an unforgettable experience as if you were stepping back in time. The first stop is the Basilica del Voto Nacional. Due to its size and style, it is considered the largest neo-Gothic temple in the Americas, and the most important piece of neo-gothic architecture in Ecuador. You will continue to the Plaza Grande, or Independence Square. Located here are the Presidential Palace, the Catholic Cathedral and the Archbishop's Palace. Following is the Church of San Francisco de Quito that houses masterpieces of talented indigenous artists from the 17th and 18th centuries. Walk through the lively colonial streets of the old town to visit the Panecillo, from where you will have an amazing 360-degree view over the city. The second part of this tour will take place at the north part of the city where the equator line meets the prime meridian and the coordinates indicate point 0° 0' 0". A must-see stop during your visit is the Middle of the World where the Equator Monument was built on what was once thought as the exact equator line. One of today's highlights is La Compañía Church, considered to be a Baroque masterpiece. Finally, visit San Francisco Market, a vibrant and colorful place opened in 1893. Return to the hotel for overnight. [B]

Day 8: Quito (Yunguilla)

Once you arrive in Yunguilla, you can already see the sustainable resources and methods they used to create this treasured community. This area is protected with the conservational efforts of the community, but rests between the two different reserves of Pululahua Geobotanical Reserve and Maquipucuna Cloud Forest Reserve. Upon arrival you will be given an introduction about the community's beginnings, history and the different activities developed by the community project. You can choose to hike on one of the trails where you can learn about the local flora and fauna and

take in the breathtaking landscapes. After that, you can enjoy a delicious meal in the project's restaurant with views of the valley below. In the afternoon you are invited to participate in the different activities offered by the project such as helping in their organic farm, in the handicrafts workshop, or in the cheese and jam making processes. You may also have a chance to visit the tree nursery project or do a bird watching activity. [B/L]

Day 9: Quito, Cotopaxi National Park

Today's adventure starts early in the morning when you drive south through the Avenue of the Volcanoes. Today's destination is 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. Subsequently, you'll continue to the Limpiopungo Lake (altitude: 12,631 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 close to the Cotopaxi National Park.

Included optional activity – 2-hour horseback riding: *You'll begin the riding tour with a briefing from one of the guides before you set out on your horse, make sure you get a photo wearing the typical dress of the "chagras" (Ecuadorian cowboys). Then, ride out across the paramo to the slopes of the extinct volcano, Rumiñahui. A legendary chagra from the area will come with you and share his knowledge of the countryside and the life lived in these areas. Return to the hotel. [B]*

Day 10: Cotopaxi National Park, Quilotoa, Salasaca, Riobamba

Leave in the morning to visit the impressive Quilotoa Lagoon located within an extinct volcanic crater and one of the most spectacular highlights of the Ecuadorian highlands. The mineral waters of the lagoon showcase turquoise colors, varying from blue to green, even yellows depending on the weather. During the visit, it's possible to rent mules or horses from the locals if the walk back up is too much for you. On your way back, see the small village of Tigua, famous for its local paintings and masks. Continue to Salasaca, located in the center of the Ecuadorian Sierra. The Salasacas speak Spanish and Quichua, not to be confused with the Kichwa from the Amazon. Their main economic activities are agriculture, livestock-raising and handicrafts including tapestries handwoven on ancient looms like it was done generations past. Many of the designs depict different aspects of their lives. We stop at the "Plaza of the Arts" and its market before heading to Riobamba for overnight. [B]

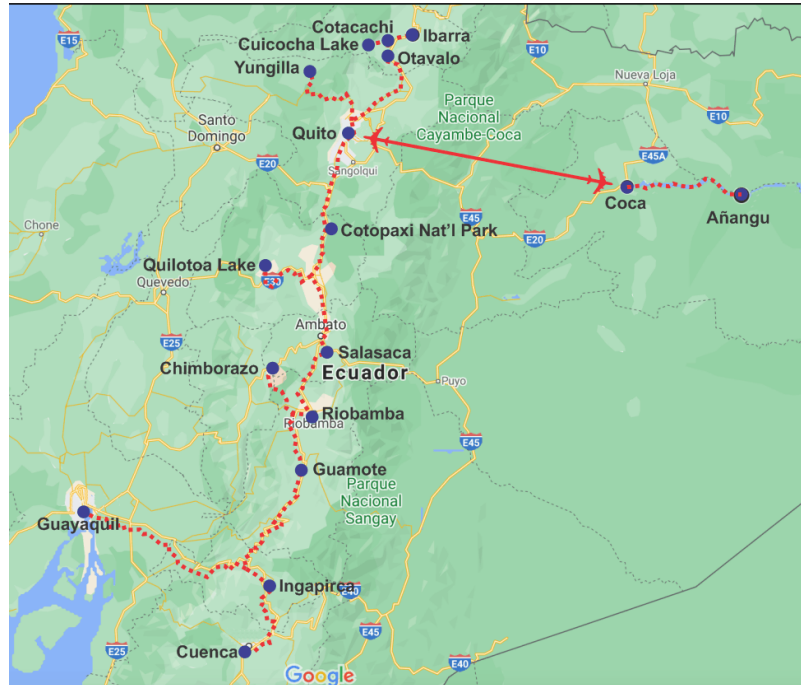
Day 11: Riobamba, Chimborazo Reserve

Today, visit Ecuador's highest volcano located about one-hour drive from town. The Chimborazo is a very impressive stratovolcano with an altitude of 20,702 feet surrounded by a wildlife. You can enjoy walking parts of the reserve and admiring the stunning scenery composed of vast plains and see an array of wildlife such as llamas and alpacas. The reserve was created in order to protect the flora, fauna and legacy of these Andean plains. Hawks and even condors can be seen flying around the Chimborazo. For a spectacular view of the Ecuadorian Andes, you can hike up to the Hermanos Carrel Refuge located at 15,748 feet, or even to the Edward Whymper Refuge at 16,404 feet. Because of the altitude, take your time and remember to breathe and drink lots of water! In the unique Llama Museum at Casa Real, learn about the Andean camelids, especially the iconic "Llama", considered to be one of the most important animals in this region. The museum provides illustrative information about its origin, evolution, medicinal use and economic importance, as well as the relationship of this species with Andean culture. The place offers interpretive trails and a handicraft store with local products made with llama, alpaca and sheep's wool. [B]

Day 12: Chimborazo Reserve, Guamote

If today is a Thursday you'll discover the massive market located in the quaint town of Guamote. Hundreds of local farmers, or "campesinos", inch their way through the streets, with the largest swell of crowds between 10 am and noon. Don't miss the unique animal market up in the field behind the San Vicente church, where ducks, chickens, sheep, piglets and guinea pigs or "cuy" (ranked as a gastronomic delicacy in the country), are bought, sold and even traded.

Today's communal visit starts at Inti Sisa Educational Center, where students learn how to sew, receive computer and English classes; and, on Sundays, have a traditional Andean music course. After, take off for a beautiful car ride through the mountains and get more familiar with the region's history and its Indigenous culture and traditions. Make a stop at the primary school where the center's English volunteer teaches, and the children will tell you about their daily life at school (be ready to play some soccer or a duck-duck-geese game). You may also visit an agricultural college where the local agriculture and medicinal plants used are explained. The day's activities depend on the day of the week and daily weather conditions so, please be aware the activities may vary. Afterwards, visit the



house of a traditional weaver who will demo how they make their typical ponchos from sheep and alpaca wool. At the end of your activities, visit an Indigenous family and see their authentic housing called a choza. This will give you a great impression on how many Ecuadorians live in the mountains. Then you continue your scenic drive back to Guamote. [B]

Day 13: Guamote, Ingapirca, Cuenca

This morning, we leave for Ingapirca meaning "Wall of the Inca", once the most important and largest Inca complex in Ecuador, where the Incas lived together with the indigenous Cañari people and considered the most important pre-Columbian archaeological site in the country and the best-preserved Inca architectural complex in Ecuador. The ruins attest to the importance of the Cañari-Inca culture in its religious, political, scientific, military and administrative aspects. The ruins encompass a cemetery, solar observatories, small roads, warehouses and apartments. The site offers its visitors an incredible view of the past and the history of the Cañari and Inca cultures. Continue to Cuenca a gorgeous colonial center was declared a Cultural Heritage site of Humanity by the UNESCO. In this city tour, discover the city's architectural highlights, such as the impressive cathedral and, from the Turi viewpoint get a splendid view over the entire city; Then, visit an artisanal Panama hat factory. These hats are made out of Paja Toquilla palm leaves mainly found in the southern coastal region of Ecuador. You can visit the incredible Museum of Indigenous Cultures, with the best private archaeological collection open to the public. that took 30 years to amass! Check-in at the hotel for overnight, [B]

Day 14: Cuenca, Guayaquil, USA

This morning, visit a local cacao & mango farm touring a lovely family-owned plantation. The family has not only created an abundance of cacao and mangos, but also other crops like dragon fruit, plantains, lemon grass and spices. After learning everything about growing cacao plants, you will peel and roast cacao beans and then grind them up to enjoy your delicious self-made chocolate dessert after your lunch at the farm. In the afternoon we drive to Guayaquil to board your flight back home [B/L]

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

Your Tour includes:

- Airfare Miami-Quito//Guayaquil-Miami
- Arrival and departure transfers
- Accommodation at selected class hotels
 - Quito Airport 1 night
 - Napo 2 nights
 - Otavalo 1 night
 - Cotacachi 1 night
 - Quito 3 nights
 - Cotopaxi 1 night
 - Riobamba 2 nights
 - Guamote 1 night
 - Cuenca 1 night
- Meals:
 - Daily breakfast
 - 7 lunches
 - 4 dinners
- Amazon Basin experience
- Otavalo Market
- Cotacachi leather
- Illumán cleansing ceremony
- Cuicocha Lagoon
- Tour of Quito

- Excursion to Middle of the World
- Excursion to Yunguilla
- Explore Cotopaxi Nat'l Park
- Visit Quilotoa Lagoon
- See Tigua's original paintings
- Discover Chimborazo natural reserve
- Community immersion in Guamote
- Visit Ingapirca Inca-Cañari ruins
- Tour a cacao & mango plantation
- Entrance fees where required
- Round-trip airfare Quito-Coca
- English-speaking tour escort during the tour
- Air-conditioned deluxe transportation
- All local taxes

Tour does not include:

- Airport taxes and fees
- Expenses of personal nature
- Travel insurance
- Optional tours
- Any services not included in the tour
- Tips to restaurants, guides and drivers



Ingapirca ruins

Hotels in your Tour:

City	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
Superior Tourist Class		
Quito Airport	San Jose de Puembo Hotel	4.5
Napo	Cultural Center	4.5
Otavalo	Las Palmeras Hotel	4.5
Cotacachi	Runa Tupari Guest House	5
Quito	Casa Gardenia Hotel	4.5
Cotopaxi	Hacienda El Porvenir	4.5
Riobamba	Casa Real Hotel	4
Guamote	Inti Sisa Hotel	5
Cuenca	Posada del Angel Hotel	4

City	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
First Class		
Quito Airport	Quito Polo Club	5
Napo	Cultural Center	4.5
Otavalo	Otavalo Hotel	5
Cotacachi	Runa Tupari Guest House	5
Quito	Mama Cuchara Hotel	4.5
Cotopaxi	Hacienda Santa Ana	4.5
Riobamba	Abraspungo Hacienda	4.5
Guamote	Inti Sisa Hotel	5
Cuenca	Cruz del Vado Hotel	4.5
Deluxe		
Quito Airport	EB Quito Hotel	5
Napo	Cultural Center	4.5
Zuleta	Hacienda Zuleta	5
Cotacachi	Runa Tupari Guest House	5
Quito	Illa Experience Hotel	5
Cotopaxi	San Agustin de Callo Hacienda	4.5
Riobamba	Hostería Andaluza	5
Guamote	Inti Sisa Hotel	5
Ingapirca	Boutique Mansion Alcazar Hotel	4.5

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

*Best available

Tour Prices:

Room Type	2-3 Guests	4-5 Guests	6+ Guests
Superior Tourist Class			
Double	\$4,585	\$4,129	\$3,809
Single	\$6,195	\$5,739	\$5,425
First Class			
Double	\$4,945	\$4,499	\$4,175
Single	\$6,559	\$6,115	\$5,785
Deluxe			
Double	\$5,869	\$5,409	\$5,099
Single	\$7,479	\$7,025	\$6,709

Prices are per person and may change without notice

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

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: EC04UIO21PU

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.