



## **Exclusive Ecuador - 15 Days (#18597)**

**Note:** Price printed on this PDF is valid until **13-10-2024** and is subject to change without notice due to Partner changes and currency fluctuations

### **Trip Highlights**

Quito– Amazon – Otavalo – Cotopaxi - Waterfall Route – Chimborazo - Cuenca – Guayaquil

### **Detailed Itinerary**

#### **Day 01**

#### **DAY 1 | ARRIVAL IN ECUADOR**

Transfer to airport to hotel.

Welcome to Ecuador!

Although it is the smallest of the Andean countries - half the size of France - Ecuador is a mega diverse country that has everything it takes to offer its travellers superb experiences, as varied as they are unforgettable, from the Andes to the Amazon, from the Pacific coast to the mythical Galapagos archipelago.



The country's greatest asset remains its people: welcoming, jovial, proud of their country's natural and cultural treasures, and eager to share their know-how, knowledge, traditions and gastronomy.

You'll be met at the airport by your guide, who will welcome you to his country and accompany you to your hotel in the historic centre.

**Hotel:** MAMA CUCHARA

**Meal:** Dinner

**Day 02**

**DAY 2 | HISTORIC CENTER OF QUITO**

Visit Historic Center of Quito

Alabado Museum

To fully appreciate the beauty of the historic center of Quito, the largest and best preserved in Latin America, there is nothing like walking it! During your walk through the pedestrian streets, you will admire the wonders of this UNESCO World Heritage Site, starting with the lively Plaza de la Independencia with its imposing Metropolitan Cathedral and then the impressive Church of La Compañía de Jesús, before reaching the place where the Church of San Francisco and its convent are located.

The city of Quito is perched at an altitude of 2,800 m, making it the 2nd highest capital in the world. Renowned for its colonial architecture, the capital's natural environment is not to be outdone: bordered by the eastern and western ranges of the Andes, the city was founded on the slopes of the Pichincha volcano.

After a delicious lunch, you'll visit one of the most interesting museums in the country. La Casa del Alabado houses an impressive collection of pre-Columbian objects, true testimonies of the way of life of the different civilizations that once lived on the lands that are now Ecuadorian

**Hotel:** MAMA CUCHARA

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

**Day 03**

**DAY 3 | LET'S GO TO THE AMAZON**

Transfers Quito – Coca – Sacha Lodge

Activities organized by the lodge



Your driver will take care of your transfer to Quito airport so that you can board for the city of Coca. Upon arrival, you will reach the port, then you will leave by motorboat on the Napo River, a first opportunity to take full view with exuberant vegetation as far as the eye can see.

Yasuní National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, is one of the most biodiverse places in the world with a protected natural area of more than 9,600km<sup>2</sup> and a jungle, home to some of the most difficult animals to observe in the world such as the jaguar, puma and tapir.

You will then continue with a 30-minute walk on a path in the rainforest. Finally you will have 10 minutes by canoe to reach the lodge. The rest of the afternoon will be free for you to enjoy the lodge. You can use the beautiful facilities and amenities at the hotel, relax in the hammocks listening to birds or monkeys or enjoy the protected pool to avoid fierce guests!

In the evening, your naturalist guide will guide you through the forest to observe the nightlife with tarantulas, snakes and many insects.

**Hotel:** SACHA LODGE

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

## Day 04

## DAY 4 | YASUNÍ NATIONAL PARK

Activities with the lodge.

You will be divided into small groups, each accompanied by a native guide of the region with knowledge of the medicinal plants of the Amazon and a bilingual naturalist guide with knowledge of the biology and ecology of the area. Depending on the weather, the day of exploration begins at sunrise to make the most of the coolness. This is the time of day when animals are most active. In the afternoon the activities can extend until sunset, where the night concert of insects and frogs begins. The activities will allow you to explore different fascinating ecosystems.

Trails will allow you to observe very closely the "Ceibo", trees with aerial roots that pierce the sky from the top of their 50m height. Other paths have been built on raised wooden platforms. You can then cross over the ground sometimes flooded by the rains without a problem. A pod will also allow you to fly over a swamp.

You can also choose activities closer to the water such as canoeing through rivers and lakes. By making almost no noise you will multiply your chances to observe the shyest animals: sloths, dolphins, monkeys, pumas... At night, the light of the flashlights reflects off the eyes of caimans or snakes.





The 43m high observation tower is one of the favourite activities for travellers. Located on a hill, 30 minutes' walk from the lodge, this tower offers a splendid and unique view above the canopy. The trick is to climb the tower at sunrise or sunset. The birds are then very active in search for food and the monkeys can mingle with the show. With the telescopes the guides will also be able to look for three-clawed sloths.

If you want to go even higher, the Sacha Lodge offers a new activity: a cabin suspended more than 45 m from the ground. This attraction offers a 360° remote control tour with a metal gimbal going back and forth and top to bottom!

You will be able to observe toucans and monkeys even closer thanks to this unique way to appreciate the Ecuadorian Amazon!

In the butterfly house we will explain their life cycle. You will be able to observe hundreds of multicolour butterflies.

One of the most popular places in the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve is the parrot clay wall. At the end of a path of about thirty minutes you will arrive at the clay wall where parrots and parakeets come to take the minerals essential to their well-being. You can see up to 11 species of birds and maybe even some mammals like howler monkeys, tapirs and peccaries.

**Hotel:** SACHA LODGE

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

## Day 05

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**Hotel:** SACHA LODGE

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

**Day 06**

**DAY 6 | BACK TO COCA**

Transfers Sacha Lodge – Coca – Quito

Depending on the time of the flight, you will have more or less time to enjoy the forest one last time on a short excursion.

You will then head back up the river to Coca to catch your flight back to Quito.

At the airport you will meet your guide and keep on with your adventure.

Ecuador benefits from an ideal climate for rose cultivation and is one of the world's top exporters. You'll take a tour of a plantation to admire the various varieties and learn the secrets from professionals to maintain these flowers in their resplendent state.

After this visit you will head to Otavalo, the next step of your stay in Ecuador.

**Hotel:** HOTEL OTAVALO

**Meal:** Breakfast



**Day 07**

**DAY 7 | OTAVALO REGION**

Otavalo market  
Cuicocha Lake  
Cotacachi Village

You will start the day with the Otavalo market, one of the most important in South America. You can haggle for fabrics, ponchos, leather goods, handmade jewelry... The perfect place to buy souvenirs!

After your walk, you will have lunch in a charming family restaurant, which offers typical dishes of Andean cuisine, with organic food grown in its garden. . Kawsaymi. In a cultural environment full of Andean flavours, you'll discover the 100% organic garden and enjoy a traditional lunch.

In the afternoon, you will discover the Cuicocha lake, inside a volcanic crater in the Cotacachi-Cayapas Ecological Reserve. A short walk will take you to various viewpoints on the lake and its two islets.

You will pass through the village of Cotacachi. The craftsmen here specialise in the art of leatherwork. This is your chance to observe the quality of the leather and the craftsmanship.

**Hotel:** HOTEL OTAVALO

**Meal:** Breakfast and Lunch

**Day 08**

**DAY 8 | MIDDLE OF THE WORLD**

Middle of the World  
Casa Agave

After a delicious breakfast, you will continue your journey south.

You will then leave in the direction of the Mitad del Mundo, on the equinoctial line, and will be able to verify the veracity of the different properties lent to the equator. Try balancing an egg on a nail and ask to have your picture taken with one foot in each hemisphere.

On your way, you will also visit the Casa Agave where you will learn all about the process of making Miske (Ecuadorian equivalent of Tequila). It is a participatory and an interactive visit. You will end the visit with the tasting of cocktails and different agave derivatives.



Arriving at the hotel at the end of the afternoon.

**Hotel:** SAN AGUSTIN DE CALLO

**Meal:** Breakfast and Dinner

**Day 09**

**DAY 9 | NATIONAL PARK COTOPAXI**

Parking refuge José Rivas

Limpiopungo Lake

In the morning you will take “Avenida de los volcanes” to reach the Cotopaxi National Park where one of the highest active volcanoes in the world rises.

Within the national park are 4 peaks over 4,000 m above sea level, including the best-known Cotopaxi "neck of the moon" volcano (5,897 m) with a symmetrical cone covered in snow. In its more than 32,000 hectares cohabit wild horses, llamas, foxes, deer, spectacled bears and the majestic condor.

You will first visit the interpretation center to learn more about the park and its volcano, then you will stop to walk around the Limpiopungo lake at the foot of the Rumiñahui volcano.

You can take a short hike from the car park at 4,600 m altitude to the first José Rivas refuge a little over 200 m higher.

From there you will enjoy an exceptional view of the surrounding nature.

**Hotel:** SAN AGUSTIN DE CALLO

**Meal:** Breakfast and Dinner

**Day 10**

**DAY 10 | ROUTE TO BAÑOS**

Road to Baños

Casa del Arbol

End of the day free

This morning you will go to Baños.



Baños de Agua Santa is a beautiful place on the side of the Tungurahua volcano, which thus offers a spectacular view from its Casa del Arbol on this still active volcano. A little less than 20 years ago, after an evacuation, Señor Carlos Sánchez had the Casa del Arbol built on the ridge for monitoring the volcano, but it then attracted many visitors in spite of itself.

You can go and enjoy this fabulous view, and the more adventurous can swing above the void for an even more unusual experience.

The end of the day is free for you to enjoy the hotel facilities or the city.

**Hotel:** LUNA VOLCAN

**Meal:** Breakfast and Dinner

**Day 11**

**DAY 11 | WATERFALLS ROUTE**

Waterfalls route

Pailon del Diablo

This morning you take the "Ruta de las cascadas", lined with magnificent scenery, at the foot of the Tungurahua volcano.

You'll take a path leading to the impressive "Pailón del Diablo" waterfall, then cross the river in tarabita at the Manto de la Novia waterfall.

**Hotel:** LUNA VOLCAN

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

**Day 12**

**DAY 12 | CHIMBORAZO NATIONAL PARK**

Chimborazo national park

Meeting with a community

The morning will be devoted to discovering the Chimborazo Reserve, home to Ecuador's highest volcano and the furthest peak from the centre of the Earth : Chimborazo (6,268 m).





As you walk up one of its slopes, you'll enjoy the mountain scenery and spot vicuñas and perhaps even several types of bird of prey, such as condors, caracaras and falcons.

You can take a short hike from the Carrel refuge car park at 4,850 m to the Whymper refuge at 5,000 m. If you're feeling more fit, you can reach the Condor Cocha lagoon 100m higher up.

You will have lunch in a community at the foot of the Chimborazo volcano. Indigenous women have seized the opportunity presented by the development of tourism in the area and their culture to consolidate their autonomy. You will eat in the community and then share a moment with these women. They will show you the techniques of shearing alpacas and you will discover their talent for weaving in their shop.

**Hotel:** LA ANDALUZA

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

**Day 13**

**DAY 13 | ROUTE TO CUENCA**

Ingapirca

Panama hats

You will stop off at the Balbanera church, the first Catholic church built in the country during colonisation.

You'll discover Ecuador's best-preserved archaeological site: Ingapirca. This ceremonial site was originally constructed by the Cañari people who inhabited the region long before the Incas arrived. The Cañaris worshiped the Moon, while the Incas were more focused on the Sun. As warriors, the Cañaris fought against the Incas for a long time before eventually submitting, notably through a royal marriage. Typically, these invaders would destroy the cultures they conquered. Ingapirca stands as an example proving that the Incas were also capable of learning from and assimilating these cultures.

You'll visit a factory that makes the famous Panama hats. You'll find out how straw hats are made, and have the chance to buy one as a souvenir !

**Hotel:** CRUZ DEL VADO

**Meal:** Breakfast and Lunch



**Day 14**

**DAY 14 | DISCOVERY OF THE COLONIAL CITY OF CUENCA AND MUSEUM**

Cuenca Historic Center

Aborigins Cultures Museum

This day will be dedicated to the magnificent colonial city of Cuenca. Its historic center, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, is full of magnificent churches and monuments that the Spanish built incorporating the remains of the Cañari and Inca cultures.

Cuenca is the country's 3rd-largest city, after Quito, with a bohemian ambience, fine cuisine and churches and architecture in its historic center, a World Heritage Site. Cuenca is remarkably well-preserved, and its cobbled streets lined with houses with flower-filled balconies are a delight to stroll along.

After stopping off for a curious tasting in the flower market square, you'll see that the town's inhabitants are keeping craft traditions alive by continuing to work with ceramics, silver and, of course, weaving the straw hat known the world over as the Panama hat.

In the afternoon, you'll immerse yourself in the various pre-Columbian cultures represented in the Museum of Aboriginal Cultures. You'll learn more about the different cultures that have populated the territory over the last 15,000 years.

**Hotel:** CRUZ DEL VADO

**Meal:** Breakfast and Lunch

**Day 15**

**DAY 15 | DEPARTURE TO THE COAST**

National Park El Cajas (sight)

Cocoa plantation

Arrival to Guayaquil and international flight

As you leave the Andean region, you'll have a breathtaking view of the El Cajas National Park and its unique landscapes, which you'll cross to reach the coastal plain where banana plantations and rice paddies abound. You'll make several photo stops at different vantage points to take full advantage of one of the country's most beautiful panoramas, particularly of the wide expanses of Andean páramo.



You will have lunch on a cocoa farm and discover the surrounding plantations. You will be shown how to make delicious chocolate from the cocoa harvest.

You will arrive in Guayaquil, the country's largest city, nicknamed the "Pearl of the Pacific".

Your guide will drop you off at the airport 3 hours before your flight.

**Meal:** Breakfast and Lunch

## Inclusions

Accommodation as mentioned below

Transportation with a private vehicle and English-speaking guide from day 1 to 4, and from day 6 to day 15

English speaking guide in the lodge in the Amazon

Meals as mentioned

Permanent assistance throughout the trip

Eco participation to one of the responsible projects supported by the agency.

## Exclusions

International Flight

Luggage carrying and tips

Drinks and meals not listed as included above

Insurance, extras and anything not specifically mentioned as included in the program.

## Note

Prices subject to change, to be confirmed on booking:

The accommodation included in our program as mentioned in the program\* :

\* Subject to availability. If necessary, equivalent establishments will be proposed. Hotel categories according to local standards.

## Program Touring / Guide

Private touring



## Periodic Departure

**01 Feb, 2024 to 31 Dec, 2024**

2 pax

AUD 13,300 P P twin share

AVAILABLE

4 pax

AUD 11,956 P P twin share

AVAILABLE

6 plus

AUD 11,378 P P twin share

AVAILABLE

