



## The Jewel of the Andes Tour - 10 Days (#19309)

**Note:** Price printed on this PDF is valid until **03-08-2024** and is subject to change without notice due to Partner changes and currency fluctuations

### Trip Highlights

Quito - Cotopaxi - Baños - Riobamba - Cuenca

### Detailed Itinerary

#### Day 01

#### DAY 01: ARRIVAL IN QUITO

Upon arrival at Quito airport, you will meet with your guide, who will transfer you to your hotel. Situated in a circle of Andean peaks, Quito is the world's second-highest capital, with arguably one of the finest settings in the world. Originally settled by the Quitu tribe in the first millennium, Quito was an important part of the Inca Empire, before being destroyed and re-founded by the Spanish conquistador Sebastián de Benalcázar in 1534. The colonial centre – declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1978 – is one of the largest and best-preserved in Latin America. It is home to excellent museums, churches, and art galleries.



**Meal:** No Meal

**Day 02**

**DAY 02: HISTORICAL CENTER - THE MIDDLE OF THE WORLD  
LATITUDE 0 0' 0"**

Early in the morning and right after breakfast, you and our local guide start the travel tour at the downtown area, well known as Quito Colonial. You start your journey along the “churches ? trail” by visiting first the cathedral. In the cathedral, you learn about its history and the guide explains the internal design of the cathedral such as the “mudejar ?s” influence on its first stage, the area with 3 longitudinal wings, and a small transversal wing behind the choir.

After finishing the round in the cathedral, we have a short walk to the church La Compania along with the guide’s expertise. The guide will enlighten you with the history and fun facts of every place, in this case La Compania. Its decoration is based on muslin features and the altars are covered by gold leaf along with faces and birds carved. It is considered as an architectonic jewel in the American baroque style. It also has a religious value, because the rest of Saint Marianita of Jesus is located there, and according to some, she was the protector of the city.

Afterwards, we visit San Francisco, which is famous for the Cantuña story. San Francisco is well known due to its legends and stories, which make the place culturally wealthy. At the San Francisco church, there is a local hand craft store called Tianguéz, where you can find a variety of items from the Ecuadorian culture. Here, you can buy postcards, books, Ecuadorian music, natural products, and even get a coffee with Humitas (which is sweet corn tamale) offered at the local Café Cantuña located at the Plaza San Francisco.

Around midday, you head to “Mitad Del Mundo”, a monument at the equator line that passes through our country. You may choose to either visit the Ethnographic or the Inti Ñan Museums, both located near the monument. Along the way, we will stop for a traditional Ecuadorian lunch (optional and not included). After the tour, you will return to your hotel. Overnight.

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Day 03**

**DAY 03: CITY TOUR**

Your day starts exploring the bustling streets and squares of the largest historical centre in the Americas in a unique adventure for the senses. Together we will uncover traditions, history and local life of this enchanting city. Our route takes us through the street of the seven crosses, we enjoy views of the facades of old colonial homes and churches on our way to the main Square or independence Square in which is located the government Palace. As we continue through these historic streets we get a chance to meet a local family that makes their living by creating traditional sweets called Colaciones!



We walk deeper into the heart of Quito, passing by historic buildings made of volcanic stones. The stunning views of the sculpted Compania Church will leave you longing for a visit of its interiors. To learn more about this and other churches we make our way to the workshops of the master craftsmen from “The Escuela Quiteña”. These artists keep the secrets of the colonial art in Quito’s churches and museums, they are the people who have been in charge of restoring the altars and painting in these historic gems. They will share their secrets with us and allow us to try our artistic skills to create our very own crafts.

Our next stop will be at La Ronda, is a historical and bohemian neighbourhood of the city, it is a traditional street, associated with the art, crafts gastronomy and fun of Quito, it is the oldest street in Quito. Over there we will also enter at a traditional coffee shop to try interesting ice cream flavours or a traditional sweet (depends on the weather).

Finally you will visit "Panecillo" hillside with its breath-taking views of the old and modern city surrounded by the rolling Andes Mountains. And on the top is located one of the most iconic monument of Quito, the Panecillo Virgin. It is made with nearly seven thousand pieces of Aluminium and what makes this representation so unique are the wings, is the only Virgin Mary that has wings in the world.

**Meal:** Breakfast and Lunch

### Day 04

### DAY 04: COTOPAXI

After an early morning breakfast, depart towards the Cotopaxi National Park. The Cotopaxi Volcano is one of the most important landmarks in Ecuador as it is the highest active volcano in the world. Lush endemic flora and fauna of the area can be observed, including one of the most representative species is the Chuquiragua (also known as the mountaineer’s flower) wild horses, deer, llamas, and more. Whilst in the National Park one can also visit Limpiopungo Lake, located near Rumiñahui volcano (4757 meters), or hike. After this experience, you will go to a “hacienda” a colonial Andean rich farm, where you will overnight.

**Meal:** Breakfast

### Day 05

### DAY 05: BAÑOS

It is time to travel to Baños, a natural gateway to, adventure and peace. Visit the town, do some adventure trips, visit waterfalls and of course, enjoy the bohemian yet calm nightlife. Overnight.

**Meal:** Breakfast



**Day 06**

**DAY 06: CHIMBORAZO**

Today you spend the day exploring the beautiful landscapes of the area. In the Chimborazo province around Abraspungo, there are many trails perfect for hiking and expeditions through various ecosystems such as paramos, lakes, mountains and Andean forests. Chimborazo, (6,310 meters/20,697 feet above sea level) is Ecuador's highest mountain. Its name comes from Quechua: Chimborazo, razo, rasu = snow and chimbo probably from chimbana = to cross, since three snow covered passes surround the mountain.

Lush endemic flora and fauna of the area can be observed, including one of the most representative species: the Chuquiragua (also known as the mountaineer's flower). You will also see lama ?s and several birds. Furthermore, you experience the unique environment of the Andean paramo. Overnight.

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Day 07**

**DAY 07: INTISISA - INGAPIRCA**

On this day, first, you will visit Guamote. This is a little mountain village in central Ecuador, about an hour south of Riobamba. The majority of the village is indigenous, and Kichwa is still one of the main languages spoken by its inhabitants. Here tradition still plays an important role in the everyday life of its inhabitants who are proud of their heritage. One of those traditions is the Market people being dressed in colourful and traditional clothes. The first part of the market is meant for large animals. Here you will see sheep, cows, bulls, and pigs. The second part of the market is dedicated to the selling of small animals such as chicken, guinea pigs, rabbits, and little pigs. It is fun to see the people arguing and comparing their animals to each other in order to agree on a price.

After this visit, you will continue on the Pan-American Highway and you will visit Ingapirca. These ruins are the most important architectural legacy of the Incas in Ecuador, dating back to the 15th century they are a significant part of Ecuador's pre-Hispanic legacy. They are located in the province of Cañar, about an hour and 45 minutes from Cuenca.

You will be taken on a guided tour of the ruins, which is believed to be both a religious and administrative centre, as well as a fortress. The vast archaeological complex includes a roofless fortification, courtyards, terraces, temples, houses, and a ?castle ? possibly the Temple of the Sun. A museum is now open at the site, with both archaeological and ethnographic displays. There are also exhibitions of ceramics and jewellery.

Finally, you will be leaving Ingapirca heading toward the historical city of Cuenca when you will spend the night.

**Meal:** Breakfast



**Day 08**

**DAY 08: CUENCA**

The City Tour begins at the Plaza de San Sebastián, which forms the western border of the colonial city of Cuenca. Then we visit the museum of modern arts, which has many contemporary works of arts. Later on, we walk through the historic downtown area to visit the San Francisco market, the flower market, the house of culture, Abdon Calderon Park, and the cathedral. Then we will go to the New Cathedral, which is the largest in the country and observe the famous golden leaf flag. We continue the tour to the hat factory Homero Ortega to observe the entire process of making Panama hats, originated in Ecuador, which is undoubtedly the most important in our country. Later visit the “canyon” with its colonial style townhouses situated along the river Tomebamba houses. Then drive up to the hill of Turi to admire the city and on our last stop enjoy the flavours of the famous "Tortillas de Trigo" wheat.

Upon completion of the City Tour you will drive to the hotel where you will be staying for the night and enjoy and the guide will suggest some traditional dishes that you can enjoy at Cuenca.

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Day 09**

**DAY 09: FLIGHT TO QUITO**

This day you will fight to Quito, so depending on your flight departure time, the longer you stay then the more experiences we will arrange for you. Overnight: Quito.

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Day 10**

**DAY 10: TRANSFER OUT**

The journey is over, we thank you for choosing our services and trusting in our long lasting experience.

**Meal:** Breakfast

## **Inclusions**

Accommodation in double rooms

Indicated Meals



B= Breakfast / L = Lunch / D = Dinner

Transportation

Bilingual naturalist guide

Scheduled visits

## **Exclusions**

International airfares

Optional activities

Other meals, drinks, tips and other personal expenses or services not specified on the program

Travel insurance

Gratuities

Voluntary tips for guides or drivers

Travel and medical insurance

Any items not mentioned as included

## **Note**

Hotels Used

Quito

Luxury: Illa Experience Hotel or similar

First Class: Patio Andaluz or similar

Tourist Superior: Ikala UIO (Suite) or similar

Cotopaxi

Luxury: Hosteria San Agustín del Callo or similar

First Class: Hosteria Los Mortiños or similar

Tourist Superior: Hosteria La Cienega or similar

Baños

Luxury: Hotel Luna Volcan or similar

First Class: Samari SPA or similar

Tourist Superior: Sangay or similar

Riobamba

Luxury: Abraspungo or similar



First Class: Abraspungo or similar

Tourist Superior: Mansiòn Santa Isabel or similar

Cuenca

Luxury: Mansiòn Alcazar or similar

First Class: Cruz del Vado or similar

Tourist Superior: Los Balcones or simila

## **Program Touring / Guide**

Private touring

## **Periodic Departure**

**23 Apr, 2024 to 31 Dec, 2024**

Tourist Superior

AUD 3,340 P P twin share

AUD 3,855 P P single

AVAILABLE

First Class

AUD 3,904 P P twin share

AUD 5,132 P P single

AVAILABLE

Luxury Class

AUD 5,509 P P twin share

AUD 7,392 P P single

AVAILABLE

