



The Best of Ecuador

Note: Price printed on this PDF is valid until **08-04-2026** and is subject to change without notice based on availability and currency fluctuations.

Escorted Experience

- 24-Hour Local Assistance
- Professional Guide Throughout
- Guaranteed Departure
- Fixed Dates
- Modern Airconditioned Vehicle
- First Class Hotels

Visit: Quito-Mindo-Otavalo-Papallacta-Quito

Detailed Itinerary

Day 01: Arrive Quito

Welcome to Quito! The largest, best-preserved colonial city of America – declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978. The city is considered the Cultural Capital of South America and is located on the equator in a valley at the foothills of the Pichincha volcano.

Depending on arrival time, you can spend your day exploring the old town of Quito and the surrounding area. We can help you to organize a day trip (please request in advance). In the evening, one of our trip leaders will meet you at the hotel's lobby for a welcome briefing at 18:00 hours. At this time we will discuss the details and questions you may have regarding the adventure. Our first day is an acclimation and information day.

Hotel Details

Sheraton Quito Hotel or Similar.

Meal Plan

No Meal

Day 02: Equator, Crater and Chocolate

On the first day of our adventure, we will drive north of Quito to witness the equator monument complex. Visiting the middle of the world is a mandatory stop once you are in Ecuador, you'll have the opportunity to be able to stand on both sides of the hemispheres, north and south, at the same time and feel the neutral forces of the equator.

On our way, we will also stop for a view of the Pululahua crater, the third largest inhabited volcano crater in the world, hosting more than 400 people.

After, we will reach the little town of Mindo, nestled into the cloud forest. This area is filled with a wide variety of plants and animal life – perfect for a nice introduction to the diversity of Ecuador. Mindo and its surrounding cloud forest are a birdwatcher's paradise, especially for hummingbirds!

In the afternoon we will visit a chocolate distributor, where you can take a tour of the process of the cocoa, from harvesting the seed to the final product, like a delicious brownie or a cup of real hot cocoa.

Hotel Details

Séptimo Paraíso or similar.

Meal Plan

Breakfast

Day 03: Mundo, Cloud Forest

We will explore the pristine cloud rain forest of Mindo, crossing cable cars and hiking along waterfalls, surrounded by a lush green forest filled with toucans, hummingbirds and colorful birds. In the afternoon,

you will have some free time to enjoy the several optional outdoor activities offered in this area.

You can go whitewater rafting or “tubing” (several large inner-tubes tied together) as our steely-nerved guides steer you through thrilling rapids. Or try a canopy zip-line (sailing along one of 13 zip-lines over the beautiful canopy of the cloud forest.)

One of the highlights of today is the visit to the butterfly nursery, where we watch gargantuan butterflies dry their wings after emerging from their jewel-like cocoons. You can dip your fingers into a banana concoction and then be thrilled as butterflies the size of birds land on your hands for a snack.

Hotel Details

Séptimo Paraíso or similar.

Meal Plan

Breakfast

Day 04: Otavalo Market

In the morning we will visit Otavalo Market, Otavalo Indigenous people wearing the traditional blue ponchos, white trousers, and long braided hair. Learn all about their daily activities, typical food, and native language. Explore their famous handicraft market, with its wonderful textiles, alpaca throws and rugs, knitted clothing native paintings, ceramics, jewelry, tapestries, and more at bargain prices.

Hands-on cultural experience – Sustainable Sacha WarmiKuna women project.

For lunch, we’ll visit Pijal, a small village in the Andes. There, you’ll meet the women of Sacha WarmiKuna, a sustainable project celebrating Andean culture. Learn about their culture and traditions. You’ll help prepare “Aji” sauce, and enjoy a meal with fresh local ingredients. Discover their crafts, experience authentic culture, and support local women. You can buy their handmade scarves—a meaningful souvenir from your journey.

Later we will arrive at the beautiful and comfortable Las Palmeras Inn where we will stay overnight.

Hotel Details

Las Palmeras Inn or similar.

Meal Plan

Breakfast and Lunch

Day 05: Cuicocha Crater Lake and Papallacta Hot Springs

Today, after a very healthy breakfast, we have a very short drive to the Cotacachi Cayapas Ecological Reserve. The main attraction here is the Cuicocha Crater Lake. Our adventure will take us on a trek around this still active volcano, your guide will present many beautiful flowers to you along the trail, at the end of our hike, we will take a boat ride to the center of the crater to observe the activity of this volcano, witness bubbles coming up from the center of the caldera.

Hiking Activity Level – moderate. This adventure will take place on a lovely trail around Cuicocha Crater Lake, located in a cloud forest. In the early morning, you’ll have great views of the snow-capped

Cayambe volcano. The trail can be a bit muddy, so make sure you wear your hiking shoes.

Hiking Time: 4.5 hours

Hiking Distance: 9.3 miles (4.82 km)

Elevation Gain: 1300 feet (45.72 meters)

Minimum Elevation while hiking: 10400 feet (3169.92 meters) Maximum Elevation: 1550 feet (472.4 meters)

What to wear today: Pants, t-shirt, fleece, hiking shoes, gloves, hat, buff, bring rain jacket and pants, water bottle, sunscreen, binoculars.

In the late afternoon, we will reach the luxury volcanic hot-springs resort of Papallacta, where you will have the chance to relax at the spa resort surrounded by the view of the majestic Andean mountains.

Hotel Details

Papallacta Spa Resort.

Meal Plan

Breakfast and Lunch

Day 06: Cotopaxi-Quito

After breakfast, following a last dip in the open-air hot springs, we will drive south on the Pan-American Highway to the highest active volcano in the world, Cotopaxi. The snow-capped volcano is surrounded by the national park, home to abundant plant life, rich fauna, and Inca ruins.

We will begin our visit at the interpretation center at the entrance of the park, before continuing our drive across the páramo to the Limpiopungo Lake. During a short walk around the lake, we can observe a variety of birds and enjoy the stunning views of the almost symmetrical cone of the Cotopaxi volcano. Afterward, drive back to Quito for our last dinner.

Hotel Details

Sheraton Quito Hotel

Meal Plan

Breakfast

Day 07: Departure

Today our trip will end and you will have your International departures. Take with you your memories and photos and leave a piece of your heart, as you will want to return to Ecuador soon to experience more of this enchanted land. We wish you a “buen viaje”!

Meal Plan

Breakfast

Inclusion

Transportation: Private and comfortable land transportation.

Accommodation: comfortable accommodation based on double occupancy.

Meals: Meals as described in the itinerary.

Activities: Every activity as detailed in the itinerary.

Outdoor gear: Hiking sticks

Trip Leader: Certified expert, English-speaking adventure leader.

Exclusion

International flights.

Travel insurance (suggested).

Airport transfer (international flights).

Meals not described in the itinerary.

Personal expenses.

Tips.

Note

Unique Experiences: Organic cooking lesson with traditional fresh ingredients, side by side with local people in the heart of the Andes.

Departure on Mondays. (For 2025 departures)

Departure on Sundays. (For 2026 departures)

Please note that the prices are starting from and that upon sending a new request with specific date we will send the applicable rate and availability.

Tour Dates & Pricing

16 Sep 2025 to 14 Dec 2026

2-3 pax

AU\$3,315.48 Per Single

AU\$2,527.78 Per Twin

ON-REQUEST

BOOK

4-5 pax

AU\$3,039.68 Per Single

AU\$2,251.98 Per Twin

ON-REQUEST

BOOK

6 plus

AU\$2,708.33 Per Single

AU\$1,920.63 Per Twin

ON-REQUEST

BOOK