



## Vibrant Ecuador - 15 Days (#19383)

**Note:** Price printed on this PDF is valid until **16-11-2024** and is subject to change without notice due to Partner changes and currency fluctuations

### Trip Highlights

Quito – Amazon – Waterfall Rout – Cuenca – Guayaquil – Galapagos

### Detailed Itinerary

#### Day 01

#### DAY 1: Arrival in Ecuador

Transfer Airport - Hotel.

Welcome to Ecuador !

Although it is the smallest of the Andean countries - half the size of France - Ecuador is a megadiverse 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 will be met at the airport by your guide, who will welcome you to his country and accompany you to your hotel in the La Mariscal district.

**Hotel:** IKALA

**Meal:** No Meal

**Day 02****DAY 2 | HISTORIC CENTER OF QUITO**

Visit Historic Centre of Quito

Alabado Museum

Mitad del Mundo

To fully appreciate the beauty of the historic centre 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.

You will also visit the National Museum. It houses one of the country's most important collections of Ecuadorian art, with magnificent pre-Hispanic and colonial works.

In the afternoon, you'll make your way to the Mitad del Mundo, on the equinoctial line, where you can test the veracity of the various properties attributed to the equator. Try balancing an egg on clove and ask to have your photo taken with a foot in each hemisphere.

**Hotel:** IKALA

**Meal:** Breakfast



**Day 03****DAY 3 | FREE DAY WITH OTAVALO OR COTOPAXI OPTION**

Option full day Otavalo

Option full day Cotopaxi

Today, it's up to you! In the morning, a transfer will take you from your hotel to the rental agency to pick up your rental car and start your auto tour. You can choose between a free day in Quito to enjoy the city's attractions on your own, or the option of spending the day in Otavalo, the Andean region's famous craft market. If you're more in the mood for nature, opt for the Cotopaxi option and discover the national park.

Option day 3

Full day Otavalo

From Quito to Otavalo, you'll visit 6 different attractions.

You'll take the Pan America road north to the Quitsato, located in the canton of Cayambe, named after the snow-capped mountain there. This cultural site was built to measure the solstices and equinoxes in pre-Hispanic times, and is also considered the "other middle of the world", as the Equator line crosses this spot in the middle of the Cayambe mountain peak. Its inhabitants make their living from livestock, agriculture and the harvesting of roses for export.

To get to know its gastronomy, you'll have a cup of Ecuadorian coffee or chocolate with some cakes (biscochos); a type of baked bread with an incomparable flavour, whose production process you can see for yourself.

The next site to visit is Otavalo. It's located in the province of Imbabura, known as the Province of Lakes, and from here you'll have a view of Lake San Pablo, with the hill of Imbabura in the background.

You'll discover Cotacachi, a second handicraft market specializing in leather products, 45 minutes from Otavalo. The last stop of the day is the Cuicocha lagoon, located at 3068m in an active volcanic crater with islets, where you can admire the view and observe the local flora.

Option day 3

Full day Cotopaxi

In the morning, you will take "the Avenue of the Volcanoes" 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 high, including the best-known Cotopaxi "neck of the moon" volcano (5,897 m), with its symmetrical, snow-covered cone. The park's 32,000 hectares are home to wild horses, llamas, foxes, deer, spectacled bears and the majestic condor.



You will first visit the Interpretation Centre to learn more about the park and its volcano, then stop for a walk around Lake Limpiopungo.

You can take a short walk from the parking lot at an altitude of 4,600 m to the first refuge of José Rivas, a little more than 200m higher. From there you can enjoy an exceptional view of the surrounding nature.

**Hotel:** IKALA

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Day 04****DAY 4 | EXIT TO THE EDGE OF THE AMAZON**

Papallacta Hot springs

Casa del Suizo Route

This day presenting a total change of landscape is the perfect example to show the great diversity of the country. Before leaving the Andes, you will take a break to benefit from the many virtues of the thermal waters of the town of Papallacta.

Then you will leave the Sierra mountains to reach the exuberant vegetation and the wide rivers of the East, on the edge of the Amazon.

After lunch, you set off for the Amazon. This route offers a complete change of scenery, and is the perfect example of the country's great diversity. You'll cross the Andes to reach the lush vegetation and wide rivers of the Oriente, on the edge of Amazonia

In the afternoon you will arrive at the town of Ahuano and take a motorized canoe to reach the lodge. This first trip will be an opportunity to enjoy the panorama and observe the gold searchers in the distance.

You will have the rest of the afternoon to rest from the trip, spend some time by the river, take a dip in the pool or even have a cocktail on the terrace overlooking the forest.

In the afternoon, aboard a safe boat, you will go out in search of alligators. Your guide will attract you with some meat so that you can observe up to fifteen individuals; huge adults and babies of a few weeks.

**Hotel:** CASA DEL SUIZO

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner



**Day 05****DAY 5 | EXCURSION EN TROPICAL FOREST**

The lodge organize the activities

Your local guide, an expert in jungle and medicinal plants, will suggest activities adapted to your group and the climate so that you can feel the jungle, bathe in its rivers, walk the trails and reserves of the primary forest, discover the animals, meet the locals, their way of life, gastronomy, crafts, and customs...

**Hotel:** CASA DEL SUIZO

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

**Day 06****DAY 6 | HANDICRAFT WITH TAGUA, PAILON DEL DIABLO WATERFALL AND DISTILLERY**

Handicraft in Tagua

Distiller yod local alcohol

« Pailón del Diablo » Waterfall

After lunch, you set off for the Amazon. This route offers a complete change of scenery, and is the perfect example of the country's great diversity. You'll cross the Andes to reach the lush vegetation and wide rivers of the Oriente, on the edge of Amazon.

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.

Finally, you'll reach the town of Riobamba, with its pretty parks and churches, and superb views of the surrounding mountains.

Riobamba is the combination of the Spanish word for river (río) and the Kichwa word for valley (bamba), which perfectly illustrates the region's topography and rich mix of cultures.

The Chimborazo region has one of the highest concentrations of indigenous population in the country.

**Hotel:** CASA REAL

**Meal:** Breakfast



**Day 07****DAY 7 | INGAPIRCA RUINS AND PANAMA HAT FACTORY**

Ingapirca Ruins

Panama Hat Factory

After passing through the Church of Balbanera, the first Catholic church built in the country during colonization, you will discover the best-preserved archaeological site in Ecuador : Ingapirca.

This place, originally used as an observatory by the Cañaris, later conquered by the Incas in the 15th century, still preserves, among other things, the ruins of a temple and the residence of virgins dedicated to ritual sacrifice. You will also discover a hut, the traditional houses of the time.

Then you will continue your trip to Cuenca and visit a factory of the famous toquilla straw hats, the panamas. You will learn about the process of making the straw hat and have the opportunity to buy one as a souvenir!

**Hotel:** CASA MERCED

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Day 08****DAY 8 | DISCOVERY OF THE COLONIAL CITY OF CUENCA AND PUMAPUNGO PARK**

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:** CASA MERCED

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Day 09****DAY 9 | DEPARTURE TO GUAYAQUIL CITY**

National Park El Cajas (sight)

Hacienda breakfast

Visit Guayaquil City

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 viewpoints 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 in a typical Hacienda and learn about the cocoa-making process..

You will arrive in Guayaquil, the country's largest city, nicknamed the "Pearl of the Pacific", and visit the city with your guide. With the country's largest port, Guayaquil is Ecuador's main commercial city. Destroyed several times by pirate attacks in past centuries, the city is an example of how to rebuild and develop spaces, as demonstrated by the Malecón along the river, with its promenade dotted with gardens and historic monuments.

Finalement, vous vous promènerez le long du Malecón 2000 et pourrez prendre un bain de soleil avec les iguanes du Parc Seminario avant de rendre votre voiture de location et de rejoindre votre hôtel.

**Hotel:** GRAND HOTEL GUAYAQUIL

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

**Day 10****DAY 10 | ARRIVAL ON THE ISLAND OF SANTA CRUZ**

Transfer out Hotel – Airport

Boarding formalities and flight to the Galapagos Islands

Boarding the Coral II

In the morning, a private transfer will be organized to Guayaquil airport for your flight to the Galapagos.



You should then have your luggage inspected in the Galapagos Biosafety Agency (GBA.) To prevent the unintentional introduction of invasive species that threaten the islands' biodiversity. This same action will be repeated on the docks before any transport between the different islands of the archipelago. Before landing, the aircraft cabin will be fumigated with a WHO-approved product, to eliminate any organisms that may have passed through despite previous inspections.

The Galapagos archipelago offers a wide range of experiences to make the most of this unforgettable region. The varied panoramas range from heavenly beaches to green mountains and impressive volcanic landscapes. The fauna of the islands is incredibly rich, whether on land, in the ocean or in the air : turtles, iguanas, sea lions, stingrays, sharks, penguins, blue-footed boobies and red-footed boobies, all of which you can observe at close quarters!

You'll be picked up at the airport by your guides. A short bus ride and you're aboard the M/V Coral Yacht.

Santa Cruz is the most visited island in the Galapagos archipelago, not least because most commercial flights from the mainland land here. It is the ideal hub for travel to the other islands of the archipelago. The main port is Puerto Ayora, a bustling town with many stores and restaurants. However, if you move a little further away from the city, you'll love the island's impressive natural attractions on the coast and in the highlands. The island abounds in beautiful beaches, reserves where giant tortoises roam free, massive volcanic craters and secluded natural pools where you can dive. Its wildlife is varied: land and sea iguanas, sea lions, blue-footed boobies and much more!

#### PRIVATE VISIT TO UPPER PART OF SANTA CRUZ

Your local guide will be waiting for you as you disembark the ferry for your first visit: the upper part of Santa Cruz. You'll enjoy a delicious lunch on a ranch, then head to the "pozas" where you can see the emblematic giant Galapagos tortoises.

Afterwards, you'll take a short walk to the lava tunnel, then discover the various projects run by the ranch: a 60-yearold trapiche that extracts sugarcane juice to make molasses and brandy, as well as the entire coffee process, prepared in the rustic manner. Enjoy cane juice, alcohol and organic coffee!

Finally, you'll be driven to your hotel in Puerto Ayora, the island's main town.

**Hotel:** NINFA

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

## Day 11

## DAY 11 | SANTA CRUZ

Excursion Full Day Bartholomé





Bartolomé Island is the most famous in the archipelago, thanks to the breathtaking views it affords of Pinnacle Rock and Santiago Island. You can reach this superb viewpoint by climbing the wooden boardwalk.

It features an extinct volcano with a variety of red, orange, black and even green formations. You'll take a stairway to the top of the volcano (30-40 minutes), where you'll enjoy one of the best views of the islands. You'll also visit a small but beautiful beach, surrounded by the island's unique vegetation. It's the ideal spot for snorkeling and watching Galapagos penguins, as well as white-tip sharks and playful sea lions.

**Hotel:** NINFA

**Meal:** Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

**Day 12****DAY 12 | SANTA CRUZ**

Free day.

This day is free: you can choose one of our excursions from our catalog, or enjoy the hotel and the beach.

**Hotel:** NINFA

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Day 13****DAY 13 | SANTA CRUZ**

Excursion Full Day Santa Fé.

Located southeast of Santa Cruz, you'll reach a magnificent bay with crystal-clear waters surrounded by cactus and mangroves on the island of Santa Fe. From the boat, you'll see a white sand beach populated by sea lions and, in the distance, a small forest of giant cacti unique to Santa Fe. The island is renowned for its diversity of seabirds such as pelicans, gulls and blue-footed boobies, and you can also spot Tintoreras sharks resting on the shore.

After lunch, you'll reach Playa Escondida, a white-sand beach in the middle of a very quiet bay, where you'll disembark to relax and enjoy the sun and sea.

**Hotel:** NINFA

**Meal:** Breakfast and Lunch



**Day 14****DAY 14 | SANTA CRUZ**

Free day.

This day is free : you can choose one of our excursions from our catalog, or enjoy the hotel and the beach.

**Hotel:** NINFA

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Day 15****DAY 15 | RETURN TO THE CONTINENT AND INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT**

Flight to the Continent

Return international flight

This morning, a transfer will take you from your hotel to Santa Cruz airport, where you'll catch your return flight to the mainland. You'll wait at the airport for your return international flight.

## Inclusions

Overnight accommodation in the above-mentioned establishments.

Transport by private vehicle and English-speaking guide on days 1 and 2.

Rental car from day 3 to day 9. IFAR category vehicle (4x2) with unlimited mileage and CDW insurance, satellite vehicle. location, 24/7 mechanical assistance and airport drop-off\*.

Meals as mentioned.

Permanent assistance throughout the trip.

## Exclusions

International flight

Galapagos flight

Migration card (TCT): AUD 45 / person

Entry to Galapagos National Park : AUD 226 / person

Luggage allowance and tips



Beverages and meals not indicated as included above

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

FOR AUTOTOUR :

Fuel, vehicle insurance and additional services offered by the rental agency (GPS, Wifi, baby seat, etc.) \*\*. Insurance, deductibles and bonds :

## Note

\*\*These rates may vary until having a confirmed reservation.

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

For 4 -star hotels and up

Ikala standard rooms replaced by Ikala suite rooms

Casa del Suizo: ø superior category

Casa Real : ø superior category

Casa Merced standard rooms replaced by Casa Merced Deluxe Queen

Grand Hotel Guayaquil : ø superior category

Ninfa standard rooms replaced by Ninfa superior rooms

\*The rental agency will always ask for a valid credit card for the deposit. At the time the deposit is taken, the amount is not debited, but simply blocked on the credit card. It will be released when the vehicle is returned. The amount of the deposit varies according to the category of vehicle rented.

CDW protection (included)

The customer is exempt from part of the monetary liability for damage to or loss of the vehicle if the vehicle has been used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the rental agreement.

Does not cover: damage to tires, rims, windshield, loss of accessories (tire, spare tire, rims, radio, speakers, headrests, mirrors, antenna, fire extinguisher etc.), or theft of engine parts or components.

Top Cover LDW protection (+38 AUD / day)

The customer is exempt from all monetary liability in the event of damage to or loss of the vehicle, if the vehicle has been used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the rental contract.

Does not cover: damage to tires, rims, windscreen, loss of accessories (tire, spare tire, rims, radio, speakers, headrests, mirrors, antenna, fire extinguisher etc.), nor theft of engine parts or components.



## Program Touring / Guide

Private touring

## Periodic Departure

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

Mentioned Hotels

AUD 6,195 P P twin share

AUD 7,713 P P single

AVAILABLE

4 Star and up

AUD 6,586 P P twin share

AUD 8,103 P P single

AVAILABLE

