



Charms of Continental Ecuador - 11 Days (#18594)

Note: Price printed on this PDF is valid until **26-05-2024** and is subject to change without notice due to Partner changes and currency fluctuations

Trip Highlights

Quito – Otavalo – Amazon – Waterfall Route – Cuenca – Guayaquil

Detailed Itinerary

Day 01

DAY 1 | WEDNESDAY | ARRIVAL IN ECUADOR

Transfer to your 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'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 center.

Hotel: MAMA CUCHARA

Meal: Dinner

Day 02

DAY 2 | THURSDAY | HISTORIC CENTER OF QUITO

Visit Historic Center of Quito

Mitad del Mundo

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.

You'll also go to the Panecillo, where the statue of the Virgin of El Panecillo is enthroned. This is one of Quito's most emblematic landmarks, at over 3,000 meters above sea level. This bread-shaped hill offers an unrivalled view of Quito. It's the perfect place to enjoy a canelazo: a typically Andean hot drink.

After a delicious lunch, you'll set off in the direction of 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 a nail and ask to have your photo taken with a foot in each hemisphere.

Hotel: MAMA CUCHARA

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch



Day 03**DAY 3 | FRIDAY | ROSE PLANTATION IN CUICOCHA REGION**

La Compañía Hacienda

Cuicocha Lake

Cotacachi Village

Ecuador has an ideal climate for planting roses, and is one of the world's leading exporters. You'll take a tour of a plantation, in hacienda La Compañía to admire the different varieties and hear the professionals' secrets for keeping the flowers resplendent.

You will then discover Lake Cuicocha. You will walk along the ridges of this magnificent crater lake to see its two islets from all angles. The reserve is renowned for its abundance of orchids.

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

Hotel: HOTEL OTAVALO

Meal: Breakfast

Day 04**DAY 4 | SATURDAY | OTAVALO REGION**

Otavallo Handicraft Market

Papallacta Hot spring

You will start the day with the Otavallo 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!

A stop at the fruit and vegetable place will allow you to sample some unfamiliar flavors.

You will have lunch in an authentic restaurant, which offers typical dishes of Andean cuisine, with organic food grown in its garden. Kawsaymi, is the perfect place to discover a cultural environment full of Andean flavours, and enjoy a traditional lunch with the local family.

After lunch, you'll head towards the thermal waters of the village of Papallacta to benefit from their numerous virtues and enjoy a relaxing moment. Due to the presence of the Antisana and Cayambe volcanoes, the thermal waters emerge at temperatures reaching around 70°C. The waters of Papallacta are well-known for their medicinal properties.



Night at Papallacta thermal baths hotel.

Hotel: TERMAS DE PAPALLACTA

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 05

DAY 5 | SUNDAY | ARRIVAL TO THE JUNGLE

Route to Misahualli Port

Lodge activities

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 end of the morning, 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.

After lunch, you can go tubing. Sit back and let the current carry you along.

At 6.30pm, if you wish, you can take part in an evening walk in the forest. You can listen to the sounds of the forest, which remains alive at night: bats, owls, insects, toads, frogs... You may also come across creatures that are often despised but are nonetheless very important: snakes, tarantulas, insects, etc. If the sky is clear, you'll be able to see the Milky Way, unique from the equator.

Hotel: ITAMANDI ECO LODGE

Meal: Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

Day 06

DAY 6 | MONDAY | ACTIVITIES FROM THE LODGE

Jungle Trekking

Community

After breakfast, you will set off on a 3-4 hour walk through the primary forest accompanied by your guide. Your guide will explain how the tropical ecosystem works. You will also learn about medicinal plants and may even see some birds or monkeys.

You will then return to the lodge for lunch.



This afternoon you will visit a nearby Kichwa community. They will share their customs and way of life with you. You will be able to observe their interaction with the forest and its inhabitants.

You will be shown the process of making chicha : a drink made from fermented cassava. The children will be happy to show you a traditional dance. You will also be shown a shop area where handicrafts are available for sale. These purchases are a great help to the community.

Hotel: ITAMANDI ECO LODGE

Meal: Breakfast, lunch and Dinner

Day 07

DAY 7 | TUESDAY | ROUTE TO BAÑOS

YanaCocha Biologic Park

Waterfall Route : Pailòn del Diablo and Manto de la Novia waterfalls

After leaving the lodge, you continue south to the town of Baños de Agua Santa. On the way, a visit to the Yana Cocha park will give you an insight into the fauna of the Amazon. Unfortunately, it is being trafficked extensively. The aim of the park is to save these species. Once they have been injured or rescued from a dramatic situation, the animals are welcomed in this refuge. Sometimes they may be released back into the wild, depending on how they have been affected by contact with humans.

Then, we will 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.

Finally, you will arrive to the nice town of Baños.

Hotel: SAMARI SPA

Meal: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 08

DAY 8 | WEDNESDAY | CHIMBORAZO RESERVE

Chimborazo

Community



The morning will be for the discovery of 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 09

DAY 9 | THURSDAY | ROUTE TO CUENCA

Guamote indigenous markets

Ingapirca

Panama hat

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

Located in the middle of the train lines, the Guamote market is one of the largest in rural Ecuador. It is not very touristy, but very typical and colourful. The men wear colourful ponchos and the women brightly coloured skirts. Every Thursday, the streets are packed with people. The vast majority are natives from the Guamote area who come to sell their produce and especially their animals. One of the most spectacular parts of the market.

On your way, 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 also 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 10

DAY 10 | FRIDAY | DISCOVERY OF THE COLONIAL CITY OF CUENCA

Cuenca Historic Center

Aboriginal 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 11

DAY 11 | SATURDAY | ROAD TO GUAYAQUIL

National Park El Cajas (sight)

Cocoa Plantations

Visit Guayaquil City and international flight back



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". 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.

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 day 11

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.



* 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 7,111 P P twin share

AUD 9,380 P P single

AVAILABLE

4 pax

AUD 5,918 P P twin share

AUD 8,187 P P single

AVAILABLE

6 plus

AUD 5,088 P P twin share

AUD 7,357 P P single

AVAILABLE

