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Ficha viaje



INLAND & AMAZON 16 DAYS, QUITO TO QUITO

From the heights of the Andes to the heat of the Amazon rainforest, experience an incredible land of contrasts on this 16-day journey through Ecuador.

Explore the jungle by canoe and stay with a local Quichua family for an extraordinary cultural experience you'll never forget.

This is more than just a tour—it's a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Resumen del viaje

From the heights of the Andes to the heat of the Amazon rainforest, experience an incredible land of contrasts on this 16-day journey through Ecuador. Explore the jungle by canoe and stay with a local Quichua family for an extraordinary cultural experience you'll never forget. Scour the market at Otavalo for special treasures and cure what ails you in a mountain hot spring.

Arrive at any time.

Day 2 Papallacta Hot Springs Free morning to explore Quito. Travel by bus in the afternoon to Papallacta hot springs.

Days 3-4 Amazon Homestay Travel by bus into the Amazon jungle. Spend two nights with a local Quichua family at a homestay in a small village.

Days 5-6 Jungle Lodge Journey further into the Amazon to a jungle lodge. Included guided walks and canoe rides to learn about the natural history and to spot wildlife. Optional whitewater rafting excursion on the Napo River.

Days 7-8 Baños Continue by bus to Baños. Numerous outdoor optional activities available like hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking, or soaking in the hot springs.

Days 9-11 Cuenca/Quito Bus ride south to the colonial city of Cuenca. Optional day trips to Cajas

National Park or to the Inca ruins of Ingapirca. Fly back to Quito.

Days 12-13 Cayambe Travel by bus to Cayambe. Spend a night at a 400 year-old hacienda at the base of a volcano. Optional hike to the volcano's glacier.

Days 14-15 Otavalo/Quito Visit Otavalo and the famous handicrafts market. Return by bus to Quito in the afternoon.

Day 16 Quito Depart at any time

Itinerario ampliado

Wandering Quito and colonial cities, soaking in Andean hot springs, feeling like a local at a Quichua homestay, searching for wildlife in the Amazon and adventure in Baños, shopping at the Otavalo market!

DAY 1 QUITO

Arrive in Quito at any time. There are no planned activities, so check into our hotel and enjoy the city.

Located 2850m (9348 ft) above sea level, the Ecuadorian capital of Quito enjoys a wonderful spring-like climate, despite the fact that it is only 22 km (14 miles) south of the Equator. Nestled in a valley flanked by mountains, on a clear day several snow-capped volcanoes are visible from the city centre. Add to its beautiful location a rich history and well-preserved colonial district, and you begin to understand Quito's appeal to thousands of tourists every year.

In 1978 UNESCO declared Quito a World Heritage site, and any new development in Quito's old town is now strictly controlled. Life in Quito tends to be peaceful, though the drivers are fond of using their car horns! There are approximately 2,000,000 inhabitants in the metropolitan area, but the pace is relaxed and the residents hospitable.

Quito is separated into two basic sections, the old and the new cities. The old city is full of historical buildings and churches. One of the more noteworthy is the Catedral de Quito, located on the Plaza de la Independencia. Built between 1550 and 1562, it was one of the first neoclassical works in Quito. La Compañía de Jesús Church is considered one of the most beautiful in the Americas. The decorations in the Compañía contain approximately one and one-half tons of gold, and construction of the church took 170 years (1605-1775).

The small, rounded hill dominating the old town is El Panecillo or 'the Little Bread Loaf,' a major Quito landmark. From here there are marvellous panoramic views of the entire city and surrounding volcanoes. You can easily take a trolley (streetcar) or a cab between the Old Town and New Town.

Quito's large foreign population and steady stream of travellers have given it a varied and vibrant nightlife, and salsotecas and other dance clubs abound. For a real Ecuadorian experience though, be sure and drop by a peña if you can; these are great places for meeting locals and dancing, as well as enjoying local cooking.

Just a couple of hours south of Quito is Parque National Cotopaxi, home to Cotopaxi Volcano (5897 m/19342 ft). the beautiful cone-shaped, snow covered volcano is Ecuador's second highest peak and the highest active volcano in the world. This is a great spot for a days hiking (up to the refuge on the glacier's edge) or mountain biking (downhill all the way). True enthusiasts attempt the climb to the summit (overnight excursion). Allow yourself an extra day or two in Quito, before or after your trip, if you want to conquer Cotopaxi.

DAY 2 PAPALLACTA HOT SPRINGS

The morning is free explore Quito on your own. In the afternoon take a bus trip through the heights of the Andes en route to the Amazon. Stop for the night in Papallacta, and relax in the natural mineral hot pools.

The village of Papallacta sits 60 km (37 miles) southeast of Quito, over the Andes and on the outer rim of the Amazon Basin. This small village, surrounded by cloud forest on the road between the highlands and the Oriente, has arguably the best thermal springs in all of Ecuador. It is the perfect place to spend a relaxing evening soaking in the mineral hot springs, while enjoying the great natural beauty of the area.

Approximate Distance: 60km

Estimated Travel Time: 2 hours

DAY 3-4 AMAZON HOMESTAY

This morning we descend into the Amazon jungle region. Notice the scenery change dramatically as we leave the mountains and enter the lush, tropical Amazon rainforest. Stay with a Quichua family and enjoy the hospitality of these wonderful people, and experience life in the jungle first-hand.

In the 16th century, Spanish conqueror Francisco de Orellana ventured from Quito into the eastern jungle, in search of El Dorado, a mythical stash of Inca gold hidden away in the jungle. While he didn't find gold, he did discover Ecuador's Rio Napo, which along with Peru's Marañón, combines to create the mighty Amazon. He followed the Napo into the Amazon mainstream and travelled all the way through the dense jungle to the Atlantic Ocean on Brazil's coast.

Consider the variety of mammals living in Ecuador's Amazon: armadillos, honey bears, sloth, 60 varieties of bats, tapirs, peccaries, jaguar, monkeys, manatees and much more. Birds are the richest group of Amazon vertebrates, at approximately 1000 species. Visitors will see hummingbirds, toucans, macaws and tanagers on land, and darters, herons and gulls on water. If fortunate, you may catch a glimpse of the prehistoric looking Hoatzin, with its brightly coloured feathers and sharp talons.

Over 500 species of trees per acre have been recorded in the jungles of the upper Amazon. If this doesn't seem particularly astonishing, consider that this is ten times greater than either Europe or North America, and you will begin to appreciate the significance of the conservation of this area and others like it.

The rainforest is also the traditional home of many indigenous communities, whose traditional homelands and way of life are threatened by the encroachment of 20th century industries like mining, petroleum exploitation and large-scale cash-crop farming. Among the most representative are the Siona-Secoya, Cofan, Huaorani, Shuar, Ashuar and Quichua.

We spend four days of the Inland & Amazon itinerary in the Ecuadorian Amazon, near the Napo River. Our home for two of these days is with a Quichua family near the community of Cando, where we will learn their traditional beliefs and customs, their many practical uses for the jungle's wealth of natural products. The family is friendly and over the years they have met countless visitors from around the globe. It is a great opportunity to make new friends, while experiencing a completely different way of doing things—one that may give you a different perspective on life.

Approximate Distance: 95km

Estimated Travel Time: 4 hours

DAY 5-6 JUNGLE LODGE

Today travel to a jungle lodge located on the Napo River, one of the Amazon's two major tributaries.

We explore by foot and canoe to learn about the natural history of this area. There is also an option for an exhilarating whitewater rafting trip on the Napo! Please note that wildlife viewing in this part of the jungle is limited for a number of reasons, and that this is more a cultural learning experience.

DAY 7-8 BAÑOS

Return to the mountains on our journey to Baños, a small town nestled in the hills. Take advantage of the many outdoor options, or simply relax in the thermal waters.

Baños means 'baths' and there are several in and around the town. Some thermal springs come from the base of Tungurahua Volcano ('little hell' in Quichua), others have melt water running into them from the volcano's glaciated flanks. Locals swear that the baths are good for your health; it's definitely worth rising early to watch the dawn creep over the mountains from a hot spring vantage point.

The town is the perfect setting for outdoor pursuits, including horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, climbing and rafting in the surrounding mountains and on the River Patate. Baños is one of the most popular tourist spots in the country and you will find many Ecuadorian families vacationing here. One look at this delightfully green mountain town and you will know why. Surprisingly, it is pleasant and unspoiled.

DAY 9-11 CUENCA/QUITO

Today we head south along the "Avenue of Volcanoes", through Ecuador's central valley of mountains to the colonial town of Cuenca. This is a full day trip with spectacular views along the way. Explore the town, hike in Cajas National Park, or visit the nearby Inca ruins of Ingapirca. A short flight takes the group back to Quito for the night of Day 11.

Considered the most beautiful city in Ecuador, Cuenca has had an eventful history. Barely half a century before the arrival of the Spaniards, the powerful Inca Tupac Yupanqui was undertaking the difficult conquest of the local Cañari people, who struggled bravely to stem the expansion of the Inca Empire. After several years of bitter fighting, Tupac Yupanqui's forces prevailed.

The Inca began the construction of a major city whose splendour and importance was to rival that of the imperial capital of Cuzco. Stories of sun temples covered with gold sheets and palaces built using the finest skill of Cuzqueño stonemasons abound. What happened to Tomebamba, as the city was called, is however, a complete mystery. By the time the Spanish chronicler Cieza de León passed through in 1547, Tomebamba lay in ruins, although well-stocked storehouses indicated how great it had recently been.

The Tomebamba River divides Cuenca in half, and south of the river lie fairly recent suburbs and the modern university. To the north is the heart of the colonial city. Although Cuenca has expanded to become Ecuador's third largest city with 165,000 inhabitants, it still retains a pleasantly provincial air and the old centre has churches dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. The earliest building is the original Cathedral, construction of which began in 1557, the year Cuenca was founded by the Spanish conquerors.

Explore the city's sights including cobbled streets, red-tiled roofs, art galleries, flower markets, shady plazas and museums. The villagers in the surrounding areas are expert milliners, creating beautiful Panama hats (which should perhaps more accurately be called Ecuador hats). The ruins of Ingapirca lie approximately an hour and a half drive north of Cuenca, through some of Ecuador's most beautiful countryside. Although it is a major Inca site, not a lot is known about its history

Yet another nearby attraction is Area Nacional de Recreacion Cajas, a protected area of 28,000 ha, about 30 km (19 miles) northwest of the city of Cuenca. The terrain is quite stark, mostly above 4000m (13120 ft) in the páramo (grassy highlands), with many clear lakes and a great variety of bird life, beautiful scenery and good hiking possibilities.

Fly back to Quito for the night of **Day 11**

Approximate Distance: 321km

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hours

DAY 12-13 CAYAMBE

Leave Quito and continue north to the village of Cayambe, where we stay in a 400-year-old hacienda nestled at the base of Cayambe Volcano. G Adventures discovered this hacienda years ago and it has become special part of all our trips in the area. If you are feeling energetic, you can travel to the base of the volcano's glacier and hike back down. Rent horses and head off into the hills, or explore the beautiful property surrounding the hacienda, including an indoor swimming pool.

The town of Cayambe is famous both for its dairy industry and the snow-capped, extinct volcano of the same name that dominates the town. Ecuador's third highest peak at 5790m/18991 ft, it is the highest point in the world through which the Equator directly passes — at about (4600m/15088 ft) on the south side.

Hacienda Guachalá, the estate where we stay has a long and dynamic history. Originally part of an Inca outpost, the farm became an encomienda given to a conquistador. In 1647, D. Francisco de Villacis bought the sheep farm and constructed a wool factory, exporting his product to Europe. A great grandson of Pope Alejandro VI (one of the Borjas), married Maria de Villacis in 1700, and the farm passed into the hands of the Borja Family until 1832, when it was sold once again. In 1892, the farm was bought by Josefina Bonifaz, who changed the wool factory to a dairy farm. Her son Neptali Bonifaz, who eventually became Ecuador's President, divided the inherited land between his sons.

Following land reform laws of the 1960s, part of the land was returned to indigenous families. Today only a small fraction of the original land, including the original house and factory buildings, remains in the hands of the Bonifaz family. Part of the family home was refurbished in the early 1990s and converted into a small hotel, the Hacienda Guachalá, where we enjoy the natural beauty of this highland area surrounded by the hacienda's colourful history.

DAY 14-15 OTAVALO/QUITO

Next we visit the beautiful area of Otavalo and its world famous handicrafts market. Villagers from the surrounding countryside come here every week to sell handmade goods as well as livestock, fruits and vegetables. Return to Quito for our farewell evening.

Otavalo is justly famous both for its friendly people and its Saturday market. The market dates back to pre-Inca times when jungle products were transported from the eastern lowlands and traded for highland goods. Today's market has two different functions: the local market for buying and selling animals, food and other essentials, and the crafts market for the tourists and other interested people.

There are three main market plazas in town, with the overflow spilling out onto the streets linking them. The Plaza de Ponchos is where you will find most handicraft items. You will find colourful woollen goods such as ponchos, gloves, hats, blankets, scarves and sweaters, as well as fine

tapestries and a variety of embroidered blouses and shirts, shawls, string bags, and rope sandals. This market gets underway at dawn and continues until early afternoon. Remember, bargaining is expected for every purchase! If you're good you should be able to get at least 20% off of the starting price. The food market sells produce and household goods for the locals, and there is an animal market beginning in the predawn hours on the outskirts of town. Although these are not designed for visitors, they are cultural experiences to see and are definitely worth a visit.

One of the most evident features of the Otavaleños' cultural integrity is their traditional dress. This is not just put on especially for the tourists at the Saturday market, but is worn throughout their daily life.

Approximate Distance: 30km

Estimated Travel Time: 1 hour

DAY 16 QUITO

Depart at any time.

Incluido

- 2-day Amazon jungle homestay, 2-day excursion to Amazon jungle lodge, Day trip to Otavalo market.
- 6 Breakfasts, 4 Lunches, 4 Dinners. (Allow USD240-315 for meals not included.)
- Hotels (9 nts), jungle lodge (2 nts), simple village cabañas (2 nts, multi-share), historic mountain hacienda (2 nts).
- Public bus, plane, taxis, motorized canoe, 4x4 vehicles, pickup truck.
- Chief Experience Officer (CEO) throughout, local guides.
- Small group experience; Max 16, Avg 10

No Incluido

Flights to and from destination are not included.

Hoteles