

Naturaleza de Ecuador

Day 1: Arrival Quito

Arrive in Quito, the capital of Ecuador that is 2800m (9,600ft) in altitude in the middle of the Andes Mountains. Assistance and transfer from the airport to your hotel is included. Spend your first night near the equator and rest after the long journey. *Hotel Dann Carlton*

Day 2: Quito City Tour

In the morning we will meet you at your hotel in Quito and start a city tour. This city tour covers the major colonial churches such as La Catedral, La Compañía and San Francisco. During this tour you will learn about the history and architecture of Quito. The tour continues through narrow streets, ancient colonial houses with Moorish-style arches and mysterious patios to El Panecillo, and a neutral vantage point for an overwhelming view of the city. Here we will have lunch.

Guided Cultural Tour of Quito/Free afternoon to Explore on your own

After lunch you will have an opportunity to explore the city on your own with tips from your guide or you can experience a guided cultural tour. Your guide will take you around to places not always seen on a typical Quito tour, for example: La Ronda, Las Colaciones, Casa de Antonio Jose de Sucre, Museo de la ciudad, just to name a few. Let your guide know what you are interested in and he/she will take you on a custom cultural tour. *Breakfast and Lunch are included in the price. *Hotel Dann Carlton*

Day 3: Mitad del Mundo/Míndo

We will pick you up from your hotel in the morning and head towards the equator. There we will visit the museum Intiñan where you will have the chance to experience the Coriolis Effect and you can stand in two places at once-the Northern and Southern hemisphere! You will have a guided tour where you will learn more about the country of the four worlds (highlands/mountains, coast, rain forest, and the Galapagos Islands). From the equator we will head towards the cloud forest in Mindo and on the way we will see the difference in vegetation

between the highlands and the subtropical region. Once in Mindo we will have a typical Ecuadorean lunch and then head to the hotel. Once settled, we will visit the butterfly house, explore around the town of Mindo, and learn about the daily lives of Ecuadorean people in this area. You will then have the rest of the day to relax or maybe do some bird watching. Mindo is home to over 500 different species of birds! *Séptimo Paraíso*
*Breakfast and Lunch included in the price.

Day 4: Otavalo

After breakfast at the hotel we will travel north along the Pan-American Highway through astonishing mountain scenery to visit the Otavalo Indian Market. For centuries, regional markets have played an important role in Indian life, providing regular gathering places for trade and socializing. The colorful local markets of the Andean valleys are famous for their fine handcrafts. The Otavalo Indian market dates back to pre-Inca times and is famous for its textiles woven on back strap and shuttle looms. Otavalo is South America's most famous Indian fair. You will have time to visit the famous market and stroll along the narrow cobblestone streets filled with Otavalo Indians wearing blue ponchos, white trousers and long braided hair. After lunch we will travel to Cotacachi to see the Crater Lake. We will return to Quito to spend the night. *Breakfast and lunch included in the price. *Hotel Dann Carlton*

Day 5: Rainforest

Departing from Quito, a 30-minute flight to Coca over the eastern Andes mountain range. After landing, about mid-morning, a 5 min transfer will take you to "La Misión" Port, where you will embark onto a comfortable motorboat. Here we start a canoe ride along the Napo River for about 2 hours, box lunch and coffee is provided in route.

Along the way, birds like herons, kingfishers and others can be spotted. After arriving at NWC's entry dock we disembark for restroom then take a majestic and peaceful 2 hour canoe ride surrounded by trees, paddling along a narrow creek that connects to the lake where the lodge is located.

We will have chances to spot some species of monkeys as well as large birds like toucans, parrots or even macaws. In the late afternoon we will arrive to the Napo Wildlife Center with an overwhelming view of the Añangu Lake. We will receive a welcome drink followed by a briefing from the local manager. *Napo Wildlife*

Day 6: Rainforest

We will wake up early to reach the easiest access parrot clay licks in Ecuador, about 1 hour away from the lodge, guests reach there just before parrot activity kicks off at the clay lick between 7:30 to 8:30. A total of 11 species of parrots, parakeets and macaws can be seen.

Later, we will hike along the forest trail to visit the Kichwa Community of Añangu and share time with a family and their activities.

We will return to the creek and hike through a Terra Firme Forest for about 30 minutes until we arrive to the second parrot clay lick where if the weather conditions help, we will be able to find different species of parrots, parakeets and even macaws.

We will have lunch at Napo Cultural Center, where you will share with people of the Kichwa community. You will be paddled back to the lodge, where you arrive at late afternoon with a delicious dinner waiting for you. *Napo Wildlife*

Day 7: Rainforest

After an early breakfast, we leave the lodge to experience an amazing view of the rainforest from a 36m. tall canopy tower, a great way to see the life above the ground of the forest.

This is the second tower at the Napo Wildlife Center, located about 30 minutes from the lodge deep within the Terra Firme forest. As you ascend the 12-floor tower, you pass through different levels of the forest and emerge on top of a huge Ceiba tree.

Flocks of colorful tanagers pass right through the canopy of the tree, Blue-and

yellow Macaws fly past, in nearby trees Spider Monkeys search for fruit, two species of large toucans call in the early mornings and afternoons, and the life of the forest canopy opens before you. Birds that are virtually impossible to see from the forest floor far below are suddenly right beside you, oblivious to your presence.

The canopy tower opens a whole new world to guests of the Napo Wildlife Center!! Lunch served at the lodge. Afternoon visit to a Terra Firme trail, hike along primary the forest to discover the forest interior, possibilities of finding lizards, colorful manakins or the unique and endemic Golden mantle tamarin monkeys. After the hike, explore the lake and creeks by dugout canoe with great possibilities of running into a Giant otter family on the way. *Napo Wildlife*

Day 8: Rainforest

We will have an early departure and the last excursion canoeing back to the Napo River. The creek may reveal new sights of Giant otters, Monk Saki monkeys or many other rare birds. Transfer to the motorized canoe in order to return back to Coca, arrival approximately after a 2 hours boat ride in order to check-in for Coca – Quito flight, schedule to be announced according to departure details and arrangements. Spend the night in Quito. *Hotel Dann Carlton*

Day 9: Cotopaxí

We will start our day by traveling to Machachi where we will see a typical fruit and vegetable market. From there we will travel on to the Cotopaxi National Park where we will take a hike to the first refuge for mountain climbers. We will have a lunch at the refuge when we arrive. After the hike, we will travel on the La Hacienda Cienaga to spend the night. *Breakfast and Lunch included in this price.

Day 10: Quilotoa

We will leave La Cienaga and head towards the Crater Lake in Quilotoa where we will explore and eat lunch. This lake is one of the most beautiful volcano lakes in the Ecuadorean Andes with its brilliant turquoise waters. From the crater on a clear day you will see the different snow capped volcanoes. After lunch we will head to Riobamba, on the way we will stop in Salcedo to try some ice cream. We

will stay the night in Riobamba. *Breakfast and lunch included in the price. *Hotel Mansión Santa Isabella*

Day 11: Alausí, Ingapirca, Cuenca

We will leave Riobamba early in the morning after breakfast, driving South on the Panamerican highway. On the way we will see the farming landscapes of the indigenous peoples of the highland area. We will see fields of carrots, broccoli, potatoes, barley, and the famous grain of the Andes, quinoa. We will our first stop by the Church of Balbanera, which was the first Catholic Church in all of Ecuador. We will continue to travel the Panamericana and our next stop will be the small town of Guamote, where we will see the town. Our next stop will be Alausí, where we will take a train to La Nariz del Diablo (The Devil's Nose). It was one of the most difficult train track routes to build in South America. We will have lunch before going on to Ingapirca, which is one of the most famous archaeological sites in Ecuador of the Inca Empire. After we visit Ingapirca, we will travel on to Cuenca where we will spend the night. *Breakfast and lunch included in the price. *Hotel Carvallo*

Day 12: Cuenca City Tour

Today you will explore the colonial part of Cuenca; the third largest city in Ecuador, which offers you fantastic possibilities to admire great colonial and republican architecture, archaeological and ethnographical sites, sacred art museums, and markets. Churches, many art and craft shops and a flower market can be visited. All this is located amongst beautiful old houses, ornately painted and decorated, in an area that was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999. Cuenca is considered Ecuador's cultural metropolis, and also the arts and crafts center of the country. The city and the surrounding countryside are fantastic places to buy ceramics, embroidery, leather goods, and baskets. You can explore the city and might take the opportunity to look for a unique souvenir. Spend the night in Cuenca or depending on your flight, fly to Quito to fly home. *Breakfast and lunch included in price. *Hotel Carvallo*

Optional Extension

Loja/Vilcabamba/Podocarpus National Park