

## Andean Ecuador Tour

### Day 1: Arrival in Quito

Arrive in Quito, the capital of Ecuador, which 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: Mitad Del Mundo/Quito City Tour

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). We will return to the Panecillo in Quito, a neutral vantage point for an overwhelming view of the city, where we will also have lunch. Next we will take a city tour of Quito. 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.

\*Breakfast and lunch included in the price. *Hotel Dann Carlton*

### Day 3: Otavalo and Cotacachi

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 Otavalo and spend the night. \*Breakfast and lunch included in the price. *Hotel Las Palmeras Inn*

#### **Day 4: Papallacta**

Have breakfast at hotel, and then head to the most famous hot springs in Ecuador in Papallacta. On the way we will stop in a hacienda that has a rose plantation, which is one of the most popular agricultural products that is exported worldwide. We will also make a stop in the town of Cayambe to try biscotti, cheese, and coffee. After this we will travel on to Papallacta where we will reach the hotel and have lunch. You will then have the afternoon free to hike, go to the spa, or relax. \*Breakfast and lunch included in the price.

*Termas Papallacta*

#### **Day 5: Cotopaxi**

We travel on to the Cotopaxi National Park where we will have lunch. We will stay the night in the Hotel Tambopaxi. After lunch we will go on a short hike around the area. The rest of the day will be free to explore or relax. \*Breakfast and Lunch included in this price. *Tambopaxi*

#### **Day 6: Latacunga, Baños**

We will leave Cotopaxi in the morning and take a short hike around Lake Limpiopungo before we leave the national park. We will travel the Panamerican Highway and reach Latacunga, which is the capital of the Cotopaxi Province. In Latacunga we will stop to see the local food market where we will learn about the diet of the indigenous and local peoples of Ecuador. We will pass through Salcedo where we will stop for a quick lunch and ice cream, pass Ambato, which is the capital of the Tungurahua Province. We will stop to see the Salasaca market where you can purchase handicrafts from Ecuadorean indigenous group of Salasaca. Finally, we will finish our day by traveling to Baños. You will have the rest of the day to explore around the city of Baños, which is a popular religious destination for Ecuadoreans. \*Breakfast and Lunch included in this price.

*Hotel Sangay*

### **Day 7: Baños**

We will have breakfast then continue driving east through the Avenue of the Waterfalls that follows the Río Pastaza. In the village, Río Verde, we will stop in different places to see waterfalls and to take the cable car that we can see El Manto de la Novia Waterfall. We will visit the well-known waterfall El Pailón del Diablo by hiking. We will return to the town of Baños and have lunch, then you will have the afternoon free to explore or relax. \*Breakfast and lunch included in this price. *Hotel Sangay*

### **Day 8: Chimborazo, Riobamba**

In the morning we will have breakfast, leave Baños and travel through the capital of the Tungurahua province, Ambato. We will drive towards the highest volcano in Ecuador, the Chimborazo, which is 6310m (21,000ft). Through a picturesque landscape we will pass fields, valleys, and the Volcano Carihuayrazo, to the wide, high plain at the slopes of the Chimborazo. You might get to see llamas, which are still common working animals in this region. With luck, you may also see alpacas and even vicuñas, which live in a reserve near the Chimborazo. We will drive to the entrance of the national park where we will then have a short hike to the second refuge where climbers usually come to spend the night before they start the long trek up the mountain. We will also have a quick lunch here. After our hike, we will keep going onto Riobamba, the capital of the Chimborazo province. If we have time, we will do a small city tour driving. Then we will spend the night in Riobamba. \*Breakfast and lunch included in this price.

*Hotel Mansión Santa Isabella*

### **Day 9: Alausí (Nariz del Diablo), 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 10: Cuenca**

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. Depending on flight home, you will either spend the rest of the day and night in Cuenca and fly to Quito in the morning or you will fly to Quito in the afternoon to travel home.

\*Breakfast included in price. *Hotel Carvallo*

### **Optional Extensions:**

- 1) Guayaquil
- 2) Galapagos Islands
- 3) Rainforest