

Wilds of Ecuador

16 days | Quito to Guayaquil



Embark on an incredible adventure through the wilds of Ecuador from the lush Amazon rainforest to the volcanic islands of the Galapagos, teeming with endemic species. Explore colonial Quito, cross the Equator, shop till you drop at Otavalo market and soak up the grandeur of Cuenca.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Quito and the Centre of the World – touring of the UNESCO-listed colonial city and a visit to the Equatorial Monument
- The Amazon Rainforest – jungle excursions on foot and by boat with plenty of wildlife spotting opportunities along the way
- Otavalo – popular handicraft market
- Cuenca – beautiful colonial city with traditional architecture and houses overhanging the Rio Tomebamba
- El Cajas National Park - glacial lakes and small forests of quinoa trees
- The Galápagos – a cruise along the eastern islands
- San Cristóbal Island – the colony of bachelor sea lions at Punta Pitt
- Santa Fe Island – giant prickly pear cacti and the endemic land iguana

- South Plaza Island – striking black lava rock formations and bright orange ‘Sally Lightfoot’ crabs
- Santa Cruz Island - the Charles Darwin Research Station home to ‘Lonesome George’
- Española Island – the bird colonies of Punta Suárez and a stroll along Gardner Bay

What's Included

- All touring and excursions in Galapagos on a shared basis
- 8 nights STANDARD accommodation and 3 nights at the Sacha Lodge, Amazon. Upgrading to SUPERIOR or DELUXE accommodation options are also available upon request. Accommodation rating – See Trip Notes for details
- 4 nights aboard the M/V Santa Cruz II on a full board basis, main deck twin cabin (upgrades available on request)
- 15 breakfasts, 10 lunches and 7 dinners
- All airport transfers (on a shared basis)
- Services of local English-speaking specialist guides for sightseeing excursions
- Services of professional English-speaking naturalist guides in the Galapagos
- Entrance fees to sites visited as per itinerary unless otherwise stated
- Guided tour of Quito, El Cajas National Park and Otavalo

- All relevant transfers and transportation

What's Not Included

- Entrance Fees: USD\$120pp Galapagos park fee & transit card, paid in USD
- International & Domestic flights and visas
- Laundry, drinks and items of a personal nature
- Tipping – an entirely personal gesture

ITINERARY

Day 1 : Quito

¡Bienvenidos a Ecuador! Upon arrival you will be met at the international airport and take a scheduled transfer to your hotel in Quito where the rest of the day is free. **Overnight - Quito**

Day 2 : Quito and the Centre of the World

This morning visit downtown Quito and its architectural treasures on a private city tour. Quito's UNESCO-listed colonial quarter is one of the largest and best-preserved in South America. Your stroll takes you through Independence Plaza, past the Cathedral and the Presidential Palace, and on to the temple of La Compañía de Jesús with its dazzling gilded interior and the impressive façade of the Monastery of San Francisco. Touring continues with the Equatorial Monument that marks the exact point of the Middle of the

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World. With a latitude of 0°, you can stand with a foot in each hemisphere and collect a certificate for having crossed the Equator. Next visit the Ethnographic Museum to learn about the different Native American groups living in Ecuador. Lunch is served at a local restaurant. **Overnight - Quito (B)**

Days 3-5 : The mighty Amazon



Quito – Amazon. A scenic flight over the majestic Andes mountains followed by a motorised canoe ride along the Napo River brings you to your stunning jungle lodge. Over the next three days you will have plenty of opportunities to discover the pristine Ecuadorian rainforest and its colourful characters. During the day venture out into the wilds for wildlife spotting and outdoor activities and at night share your stories with the other guests at the lodge as the sounds of the jungle create your very own soundtrack.

Swim in the local lakes, observe bird species from the mini observational towers, visit the vibrant butterfly house and explore the jungle at night on foot or by boat looking out for the glowing orange eyes of the black caiman. There'll also be numerous hiking trails available along the Rio Napo or deep into the rainforest and for those looking for a bird's eye view, the canopy walkway is the perfect vertigo-inducing experience. **Overnight - Amazon Jungle - Ecuador (B:3, L:3, D:3)**

Days 6-7 : Otavalo Market



Amazon – Quito – Otavalo – Quito. After your final breakfast in the Amazon, take an easy walk on the boardwalk to watch monkeys one last time before departing your jungle lodge and heading back to Quito by plane. On arrival you will take a scheduled transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is free.

On day 7 enjoy an excursion to the market town of Otavalo. A stunning journey through dramatic Andean scenery brings you to your first stop of the day, the small town of Calderón popular for the bread dough figurines sculpted into many shapes and sizes. Continue along the valleys of Guayllabamba and Cayambe to arrive at Otavalo in time for the famous market of local handicrafts. It's the perfect time for souvenir shopping with stalls piled high with ponchos, scarves, blankets, woven belts (fajas), handbags and much more. Next stop is the traditional Indian village of Peguche where artisans weave in their homes. Lunch is taken at one of the charming haciendas in the area. **Overnight - Quito (B:2, L:1)**

Days 8-9 : Cuenca



Quito – Cuenca. This morning a scheduled transfer takes you to the airport in Quito for your flight to Cuenca, the colonial jewel of the south. Considered to be one of Ecuador's most beautiful cities, Cuenca is surrounded

by the Culla hills to the north and Turi to the south. Spend the next two days independently exploring Cuenca at leisure. Head down to the Rio Tomebamba to see the overhanging houses lining the slopes and colourful laundry hanging out to dry or wander through the colonial heart of the city and marvel at the UNESCO-listed architecture. You might also want to bag yourself a Panama hat from a local outlet. **Overnight - Cuenca (B:2)**

Day 10 : El Cajas National Park

Cuenca – Guayaquil. Departing Cuenca this morning journey through the El Cajas National Park, an expanse of glacial lakes, Andean cloud forests and volcanic peaks, on a private excursion. Stop for a stroll at Llaviucu Lake and to admire the views at La Toreadora Lake. Later continue to the coastal city of Guayaquil. The rest of the day is free for you to explore the numerous barrios, each with their own distinct flavour. **Overnight - Guayaquil (B, L)**

Day 11 : The beautiful Galapagos



Guayaquil – Galápagos. Early this morning take a scheduled transfer to the airport for your flight to the Galápagos. Arriving on San Cristóbal Island you have the option to either visit El Junco, the only permanent body of fresh water in the archipelago, or visit the Interpretation Centre where visual aids will help you better understand the origins, geology, geography and history of the islands.

After lunch on board continue to the eastern tip of the island to see the eroded tuff cone of Punta Pitt. A trail ascends from the beach to provide spectacular views of the shoreline and the colony of bachelor sea lions

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that position themselves along the beach. If weather conditions are favourable there will be the chance to swim or snorkel at the nearby islets. **Overnight - Galapagos Islands** (B, L, D)

Day 12 : Santa Fe and South Plaza islands



The sandy white beaches of Santa Fe Island are home to numerous male sea lion harems where bulls vie for the right of 'beach master' while smaller males masquerade as females to make stealthy mating moves. You'll also find Galápagos hawks perched atop salt bushes and giant prickly pear cactus with trunks the size of trees. Snorkelling and swimming opportunities abound or you might prefer to stay dry on a glass-bottom boat.

Continue to the small, lava-formed island of South Plaza where the turquoise waters contrast brilliantly with the white sand and black rock of the shoreline littered with bright orange 'Sally Lightfoot' crabs. Further exploration of the island reveals yellow land iguanas sitting beneath cacti waiting for pears to drop.

Overnight - Galapagos Islands (B, L, D)

Day 13 : Santa Cruz Island

This morning visit the Charles Darwin Research Station, the headquarters of scientific investigation, conservation and the National Park administration in the Galápagos. Meet the giant tortoise and visit the impressive giant prickly-pear cactus forest, home to many land birds. Lunch is enjoyed in the cooler highlands of the island.

The afternoon brings with it several different options for land and water based activities. Trek along trails amid miconia forest,

mountain bike down to Garrapatero Beach, sea kayak or visit an organic coffee plantation. There's also the option to spend the day SCUBA diving, at an additional cost. **Overnight - Galapagos Islands** (B, L, D)

Day 14 : Española Island



Enjoy a morning outing to Punta Suárez for an exciting walk over lava and boulder terrain to visit unique sea bird colonies of waved albatross, Nazca boobies and swallow-tail gulls. Among its land birds the Hood Island mockingbird, Galápagos doves and three species of Darwin's finches are common highlights. In the afternoon explore the white coral beach of Gardener Bay to observe sea lions. There's also the chance to swim, snorkel or ride aboard the glass-bottom boat. In the evening back on board enjoy a farewell cocktail and dinner. **Overnight - Galapagos Islands** (B, L, D)

Day 15 : Baltra Island

Galápagos – Guayaquil. Disembarking at Baltra Island this morning, bid farewell to your captain, crew and fellow guests and transfer to the airport for your flight back to the coastal city of Guayaquil on the mainland. Upon arrival take a scheduled transfer to your hotel for the night. The rest of the day is free for you to explore the numerous barrios, each with their own distinct flavour. **Overnight - Guayaquil** (B, L)

Day 16 : Guayaquil

Today marks the end of your incredible journey through the wilds of Ecuador. After breakfast and hotel check out you will take a scheduled transfer to the airport in time for your onward international departure flight. (B)

Prices shown are 'per person' based on a travelling party of at least 2 adults in twin/double occupancy. The 'Single supplement' applies for single travellers who require their own room and needs to be added to the per person price.

PRICES / DATES 2021

Date	Twin Share	Single
26 Feb	USD 9,395	USD 11,545

PRICES / DATES INFO

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