

MENU



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## Ecuador

Ecuador is a tiny country on the northwestern coast of South America that most people don't think of when they go on vacation. It is a relatively peaceful country in contrast to Columbia on it's Northern border and Peru on it's Southern border. Sitting on the equator between Colombia and Peru, Ecuador is the smallest of the Andean nations, covering an area no bigger than Nevada. For all its diminutive size, however, the country is packed with startling contrasts of scenery, from steaming tropical rainforests and windswept highlands to ice-capped volcanoes and palm-fringed beaches, all within easy reach of the capital, Quito. In this land of bold contours and bright colours, you can find yourself beneath a canopy of dripping vegetation amongst clouds of neon-coloured butterflies one day, and in a highland market mixing with scarlet-ponchoed indígenas the next.

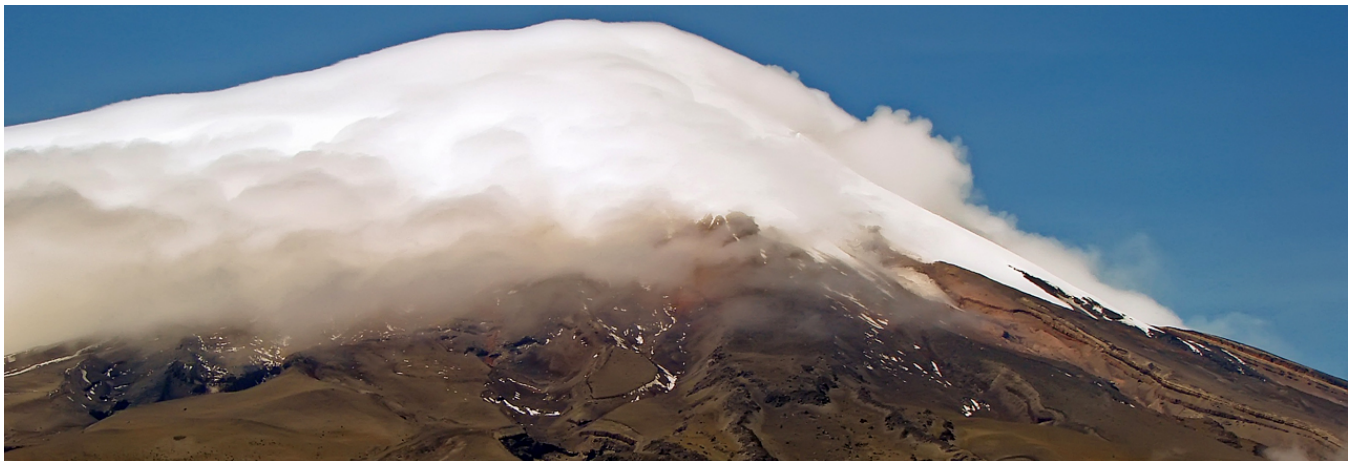
The majority of visitors fly in to Quito, whose glorious colonial centre - a maze of narrow streets and exquisite monasteries and churches - demands at least a couple of days to explore. Its modern new town is packed with hotels, restaurants and services that make it a convenient base for excursions. Striking north from Quito, the northern sierra's green valleys are dappled with glistening lakes and crested by volcanic peaks, and the area is famed for its artesanías, centres of native craftwork, leather goods and woodcarving all within a short bus ride of each other. Rewarding off-the-beaten-track destinations include the dazzling crater lake of Laguna Quilotoa, with its remote páramo setting, while more established attractions include the busy little spa town of Baños, framed by soaring green peaks, and the train ride down the Nariz del Diablo ("the Devil's Nose") from Riobamba, the most fetching of the central sierra's cities. In the southern sierra lies the captivating colonial city of Cuenca, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a convenient base for visiting Ingapirca - the country's only major Inca ruins - and Parque Nacional El Cajas, a starkly beautiful wilderness. Further south, the charming city of Loja is a jumping-off point for visits to the Parque Nacional Podocarpus, whose humid lower reaches are particularly sumptuous, and the easy-going mountain village of Vilcabamba, a popular gringo hangout.

A few hours' drive from Quito on the way to the coast, a number of private reserves showcase the country's beautiful cloudforests - otherworldly gardens of gnarled and tangled vegetation, wrapped in mosses and vines, and drenched daily in mist - and provide accommodation and guides for exploring or bird watching, with some of the best sites on the western slopes of the Andes. The surrounding north coast is best known, however, for its beaches and the boisterous resort at Atacames is one of the most popular, though there are quieter places to enjoy the warm Pacific waters, including Súa, Same, Muisne and Canoa. Among the chief attractions of the southern coast is Parque Nacional Machalilla, with its dry and humid forests, superb beaches and impressive birdlife on its offshore island, Isla de la Plata.

» [09 Nights / 10 Days Colourful Ecuador](#)

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## 09 Nights / 10 Days Colourful Ecuador



### Destinations Covered

Quito, Otavalo, Papallacta, Cotopaxi, Riobamba, Cuenca, Guayaquil

### Itinerary

Day 01: Quito

Upon arrival transfer from airport to the hotel. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 02: Quito (B)

Enjoy a sightseeing-tour of the city of Quito which leads you through the historical centre of Quito for a walk through the culturally diverse history of this city. We will pass the church of La Compañía, which has the most ornate and richly sculptured façade and interior, the Independence Square with the

Government Palace and the Cathedral including a visit. Afterwards, we will visit the famous hill of the old town, Panecillo (little bread) where you will see the angel statue "Virgen de Quito".

Then proceed to the Equatorial Line Monument called "Middle of the World" where you get a truly rare experience to stand in both, the Northern and Southern Hemi-spheres simultaneously. The Equatorial Monument marks the spot where an 18th century French scientific expedition established the exact position of the Equator. The area has been built as a typical colonial town, with restaurants, gift shops and Post Office with philatelic sales. Visit the monument and Ethnographical Museum, which shows the history of the Indian cultures of Ecuador. Return to the hotel. Overnight at Hotel. (Equatorial monument : 4.5 hours)

### Day 03: Quito - Otavalo (B)

On the approximately two-hour bus ride to famous Otavalo market, you will use the Panamericana Norte. The road descends into the spectacular same-time arid and fertile Guayllabamba gorge and village. With a bit of luck, a few minutes' later you can enjoy the opportunity of looking out the snow capped Cayambe. The Ecuadorian Line goes directly through the glacier of the immense volcano, which shows the highest worldwide point on the Ecuadorian line. Pass the Lago San Pablo with its great background - the rock massive Taita Imbabura.

You will visit a rose plantation certified through the Organization Flower Label Program (FLP). Here you will learn all about the rose breeding. FLP certified plantations abide by the aspects of sustainable development. After a stop at our hacienda for short refreshment, you will go on to visit Laguna Cuicocha, a crater lake at an altitude of 3000m with a diameter of about 3 kms. Two islands emerge from the centre, both of volcanic origin, covered with vegetation and rimmed with totora, a type of reed. The small town Cotacachi itself is Ecuador's centre of leatherworks. Here you can stroll along the small streets choosing one of the various shops as your favourite.

### Day 04: Otavalo - Papallacta (B)

On this day you will discover the worldwide known Indian handicrafts market Otavalo. The town consists of rather functional buildings with the Plaza de los Ponchos as the centre. The local Indians have achieved economic prosperity as a result of their skill in weaving a tremendous variety of designs in belts, tapestries, ponchos and other clothing items. Here you will enjoy the unique variety of handicrafts and textiles that offer this giant colourful market and certainly, you will be able to carry some new souvenirs with you. Continue to Peguche where you can observe weaver's at work.

Afterwards an app. 2 hours ride will bring you to the small Andean village Papallacta, which is famous for its thermal baths. You will visit the baths of the "Hotel Termas de Papallacta", which are located 3,220 m above sea level. Enjoy the pleasant effect of the warm, odourless thermal water surrounded by a wonderful landscape. After enjoying the pools you may go for a walk to get to know the typical flora and fauna of this region.

### Day 05: Papallacta - Cotopaxi (B)

After breakfast you will drive southwest to "Cotopaxi National Park". The highland zone, protected since 1975 belongs with its 33.000 ha wide area to one of the most attractive ecological reserves of the country. On a walk near the shallow lake "Laguna de Limpiopungo" at an altitude of almost 4.000 m, you

will have the chance to learn about the typical vegetation of the so-called "Páramo" and will gaze in wonder at the beautiful view of Cotopaxi (5897m) in the background. To take a picture here makes photographers' hearts beat faster!

#### Day 06: Cotopaxi - Riobamba (B)

After breakfast you will visit the colourful and original market of Zumbahua where you can learn about the life of indigenous people. The market offers a colourful variety of handicrafts, a variety of food and herbs as well as authentic tools and household articles. You will meet Indians wearing their typical dress, which varies from one community to the next, selling their products and animals. The atmosphere is very colourful and festive and you will see people exchanging goods, carrying heavy bags, eating special food, doing their business and cracking jokes. You may test your negotiating skills in the traditional bargaining and get original crafts.

Afterwards you continue about 14 km on to Quilotoa, the famous volcanic lake with beautiful views. In the late afternoon you will continue on to Riobamba, which is the capital of the province of Chimborazo, where a great number of indigenous communities live. Close to Chimborazo, the highest mountain of Ecuador, you will spend the night in one of the atmospheric Hosterías this region offers.

#### Day 07: Riobamba - Cuenca (B)

After the early breakfast you will be taken to the train-station to board the "autoferro" or train for a ride along the legendary "Devil's Nose". This is certainly one of the highlights of a journey through Ecuador and a very special way to get to know the country! Lunchbox is included.

Enjoying the spectacular descent to the coastal plain you will be amazed at the fascinating landscape and the technical mastery performance that makes possible that the topographic obstacles can be got over. In 1908 President Eloy Alfaro's dream of a connection between the coast and the highlands became true.

Note: Due to weather conditions or technical problems of the train/autoferro, train ride is subject to reconfirmation!

You will start the approximately 2 hours drive to the City of Cuenca. On your way you will stop at the Inca ruin site of Ingapirca, the most important monument of pre-Spanish culture in Ecuador. The ruins are located on a grass-covered hill at an altitude of about 3.100 m. On a walk through the former place where the Incas lived and hold their ceremonies, you will learn about their beliefs and rituals as well as about the way they constructed this ordination place, which has the shape of a puma.

After arriving in Cuenca, you will check in at our hotel.

#### Day 08: Cuenca (B)

After breakfast, you will visit the sights of Cuenca, the third largest city of Ecuador. In Cuenca, founded

in 1557 on an Inca settlement valley, you still breathe the colonial air of Ecuadorian history. For most Ecuadorian inhabitants - and also for travellers - this centre of art, ceramic, panama hats as well as products of silver and gold is the most beautiful city in Ecuador. Due to the special atmosphere and early 19th century architecture Cuenca was declared "Cultural Patrimony of Mankind" in November 1999. During the city tour you will see the historical buildings, located along the Tomebamba River, the "Todos los Santos" ruins, the flowers market and the main square with the old and new Cathedral. Furthermore, you will be led to a Panama hat factory.

The afternoon will be at leisure. You may walk around the narrow cobble stoned streets with the whitewashed houses and noble façades to explore the beauty of this town on your own.

#### Day 09: Cuenca - Guayaquil (B)

This day we will travel on to Ecuador's largest city Guayaquil, which is the industrial and commercial centre of the country. It lies on the western banks of the Río Guayas, about 56 km from its outflow into the Gulf of Guayaquil. Towards the coastal area the road loses height and the land is more intensively farmed. The Guayas lowlands are characterized by mangroves and ever increasing banana plantations.

Upon arrival short sightseeing tour of the city.(Transfer to Guayaquil : approx. 5 hours)

#### Day 10: Guayaquil

Transfer to the airport for your departure flight to your country or extension flight to the Galápagos Islands.

#### Exclusions:

- » Pre-registration or late check-out of rooms
- » Any item of personal nature like portorage & tips, laundry, telephone calls, beverages, mineral water etc.
- » Any services or meal other than the ones mentioned above
- » Any other expense / changes due to unforeseen circumstances while in country
- » Any other thing not mentioned in program or 'cost includes'.

#### Terms and Conditions:

- » The above offer is subject to RBI/GOI Regulations
- » The above offer including Hotels, Itinerary, sightseeing subject to change without prior notice
- » Early check in is subject to availability
- » Surcharge for Hotel during New Year / Festive season / Conventions / High Occupancy may apply accordingly upon hotel's advice at time of booking made
- » We are not holding any accommodation as of now

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