



9-DAY ECUADOR ECOTOURISM ADVENTURE TRIP

Ecuador is a country of immense cultural wealth and geographical diversity, unmatched in the Americas. Straddling the Andes, the country features snow-capped volcanoes, fantastic animals, rainforest, cloud forest and expanses of Amazon jungle, the Pacific Coast and the Galapagos Islands. Only half the size of France, the striking geographical and cultural contrasts found in this one small country are what make Ecuador a fascinating place to visit.

This trip immerses you in some of the most fascinating culture found in the Americas. Ecuador is a Spanish-speaking country with a rich history dating back to pre-Inca nation. The indigenous culture is strong, with many learning the Inca language – Quichua, before they learn Spanish. Our trip focuses on the eastern area of the country, known as the “Oriente.” We divide the trip into several destinations in order to share with you the history and culture of Ecuador, as well as the opportunity to spend time in communities that are the real Ecuador, rather than the touristy Ecuador. We stay flexible and often make plans on a day-by-day basis in order to share everything we can of this wondrous country with you.

The EcoAdventure Trip is a 9-day trip available year-round, with an emphasis on the months of November – April in order to offer an escape from the cold months of winter. The itinerary includes a mix of cultural-based, nature-based, and adventure-based activities. For custom groups, we can work with you on an itinerary that fits your group make-up. Activities we incorporate into the trip include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Mitad del Mundo – equator tour
- ❖ Quito CitiTour
- ❖ Shopping for Ecuador Arts and Crafts
- ❖ High Altitude Mountain Hike above Quito
- ❖ Hiking – moderate to intense
- ❖ Orchid Farm Tour
- ❖ Whitewater Rafting Class III-IV
- ❖ Ecotourism Coffee Tour
- ❖ Artisanal Chocolate Tour
- ❖ Boat Trip down the Napo to an indigenous community
- ❖ Orchid & Butterfly Farm
- ❖ Bird Watching
- ❖ Horseback Riding
- ❖ Waterfall Hikes
- ❖ Volcano Tour
- ❖ Optional Day of Relaxation

THE ITINERARY

From Quito, we head to the “Oriente” (or Eastern) region of the country, where we will spend the majority of our time. This region is more than 30% of the land mass and less than 10% of the population. The landscapes will take your breath away: cloud forest with sweeping Andean peaks, changing to low elevation Amazonia. You will witness people still hand-milking their cows, indigenous children joyfully returning from school, rural settings where people have little, but have a contentment missing back home. You will be warmly greeted in Spanish and smiles come out if you pull out your limited Spanish. There is no better destination in Ecuador for true eco-tourism. There are world-class whitewater rivers, bird watching, cultural opportunities, hikes into beautiful natural swimming spots, and so much more. We will can accommodate groups whose interest ranges from mild exertion and a focus on relaxation, to serious eco-adventurists.

Day One: Travel Day

You fly into Quito, the capital of Ecuador. Flights often arrive very late at night so late arrival times are to be expected. Quito sits at an elevation of 9,400 feet. This is where we will spend our first and last nights of the trip and the accommodations are included in the trip cost.

Day Two: Quito

This is your day to get used to the elevation change and enjoy the sights of the capital of Ecuador. We will opt for a city tour to some of the highlights of Old Town Quito, and/or trip to the "Mitad del Mundo"- the Middle of the World (the equator). This will be one of your opportunities to do some shopping in the central market, which is full of handcrafted leather, alpaca and silver goods. Late afternoon we will depart Quito for a drive to the wonderful town of Baños - in Ecuador's Tungurahua province, the gateway to the Amazon Basin and famous for their mineral hot springs. It is at an elevation of 6700 feet and has a temperate climate.

Day Three: Baños

We will enjoy exploring Baños and all that the area has to offer. This walkable friendly town is known for its adventure itineraries including bridge jumps, hikes, zip lining, waterfall tours, bike rides, Pailon del Diablo, Casa del Arbol, thermal baths, trails on the active Tungurahua volcano and shopping.

Day Four and Five: Baños to Tena

After a relaxing breakfast, we will plan our day, which will include a scenic drive to the Tena Region. Our days in the Tena area will include the opportunity for a raft trip, time at a chocolate plantation, a boat trip down into the jungle, a butterfly farm and more. There will also be the chance to explore local culture and sights.

Day Six and Seven: the Quijos Valley

This is our day to depart the Tena area, heading over the Guacamayo Pass to the cloud forest of the Quijos Valley and the Rio Quijos EcoLodge. Here we will have the opportunity to whitewater raft, birdwatch, hike to waterfalls, go horseback riding or just relax in a hammock by the river

Day Eight: Quito

After breakfast there is time for relaxing at the lodge, or heading to Quito for one last shopping visit. That night we will enjoy a final dinner together. Our arrival to Quito is early enough that you can opt for departing late that night, or stay with the scheduled departure day.

Day Nine: Travel Day

Many flights depart late at night, giving you the option of leaving late Friday evening, or taking advantage of Saturday to explore around Quito. We can help you with options for extra days.

DAILY ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE:

We can set up custom itineraries for EcoAdventure Tours that can range from cultural-based, nature-based, or adventure-based, or a mix of each. Activities to choose from in planning your week include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Mitad del Mundo – equator tour
- ❖ Quito CitiTour
- ❖ Shopping for Ecuador Arts and Crafts
- ❖ High Altitude Mountain Hike above Quito
- ❖ Hiking – moderate to intense
- ❖ Orchid Farm Tour
- ❖ Whitewater Rafting Class III-IV
- ❖ Ecotourism Coffee Tour
- ❖ Artisanal Chocolate Tour
- ❖ Boat Trip down the Napo to an indigenous community
- ❖ Butterfly Farm
- ❖ Bird Watching
- ❖ Horseback Riding
- ❖ Waterfall Hikes
- ❖ Volcano Tour
- ❖ Day of Relaxation

GROUP SIZE

The group size can be between 6 and 10 in total. We can accommodate multiple itineraries each day. Have a group of like-minded people you would like to see come together on this trip, custom groups start at 6 and you can choose any available week.

COST

Cost for the 9-day trip is \$2150.00. The trip price includes private ground transportation, guides, all hotel accommodations and three meals/day, all entrance fees, and adventure-related expenses. Not included is airfare, miscellaneous snacks, adult beverages and tips. We arrange accommodations based on double occupancy, and do offer a single occupancy upcharge.

A deposit of \$500 is necessary to confirm your spot on the trip. The balance for your trip is due 45 days prior to your trip. There is a final cancellation date and after that date there is no refund for cancellations regardless of the situation. We highly recommend you look into travel insurance as unexpected incidents do sometimes arise that could cause you to have to cancel your trip.

THE LOGISTICS

We believe that your trip should be defined as a relaxing, comfortable time when the only decision you make is what to take pictures of each day! Accommodations have private bathrooms and are establishments we have used for many years. In the Quijos Valley – known as Ecuador's "paraiso escondido," we will stay at the RioQuijos EcoLodge which will immediately feel like your home away from home. Visit <http://www.rioquijosecolodge.com> for more on the lodge.

THE FOOD

Meals are taken in lodges and/or restaurants, offering you an opportunity to experience the cuisine of the country. There are several cuisines corresponding to the geographical regions of the country. Bananas are ubiquitous, and rice, yuca or potatoes are staples with every meal. Rice and potatoes are considered "vegetables" here, so there is not as much of an emphasis on greens as you find in the States. Popcorn is a typical snack. Often dinners will begin with a delicious soup. And often desert is very simple and minimal. Many days, lunch will be offered on the river, alongside a beautiful overlook, and include sandwich meats and cheeses, fresh fruit and cookies.

A note regarding meals: Do not expect food to be prepared the same as at home. Dishes tend to be grilled with few sauces and spices, instead a local homemade "aji" salsa is on the table. We will go out of our way to accommodate special eating restrictions, but outside of vegetarian options (which are easy to accommodate), organic, gluten free, vegan options are a bit more limited.

We discourage drinking the local water. Their bacteria are different than your home bacteria, and sometimes individual's systems will object. We provide filtered water at each location we call home. We ask you to bring a water bottle to avoid single use plastics as much as possible.

Ecuador is famous for its dark chocolate and you should plan on not just enjoying it while you are visiting, but bringing some home to share with your friends and family. In addition, snacks at local stores and gas stations include local favorites, as well as chips, ice cream, cokes and energy drinks.

TRIP LEADERS

You will be accompanied by a private driver and a bi-lingual guide. For transportation we use a bus licensed for tourism and the driver is our partner of 25+ years. We will pull in additional guides as needed for our adventure activities.

WHAT TO BRING

We will help you with a detailed packing list to help you prepare for the trip. If you would like a copy of the packing list earlier, please do not hesitate to ask for it.

COMMUNICATION

Cell phone service and Wi-Fi is better in Ecuador than many places in the States. Anticipate WIFI at all our overnight accommodations. Some US cell phone companies charge a premium for data plans, so either plan on purchasing an international plan (most companies offer a daily plan or a monthly plan), or downloading WhatsApp and turning off your data while you are traveling.

THE COUNTRY

The land that is now Ecuador was first brought under one rule when the Incas of Peru invaded in the middle of the 15th century. The republic of Ecuador took its name in the early 1800's from the equatorial line that runs through its heart. Straddled across the Andes on the most westerly point of South America, it is the smallest of the Andean countries.

The Andean mountain chain divides the country into three distinct regions: the coastal plain or "Costa"; the mountains or "Sierra"; and the eastern jungle or "Oriente". The fourth region is the Galapagos Islands, 1000 kilometers due west from the mainland in the Pacific Ocean.

Ecuador is a bird watcher's paradise. The wide variety of habitats – from tropical rain forests to windswept highlands, mangrove swamps to hilly forests, provide a birder with a wider range of species than any other country in the Americas. Over 1,500 bird species have been recorded here (which is two times as many as in the US and Canada combined).

THE CLIMATE

Located directly on the equator, Ecuador's climate is not a four-season climate. The seasons simply alternate between dry and rainy. Temperatures change little between seasons; however, each day runs the gamut of temperatures (i.e.: Quito's daily range of temperature is between 56° - 70°F). There is one rainy season: November - May, with frequent rainfalls during the afternoon and evening. Typically, days will start out warm. If clouds build up in the afternoon, temperatures will drop, and rain is likely in the late-afternoons. Evenings are cool.

THE PEOPLE AND THE CULTURE

Ecuadorians include descendants of the Spanish Conquistadors and original pre-Columbian inhabitants, many of whom still speak "Quichua" and maintain traditions from Inca times and before. The people are approachable and easy-going, and you will find them remarkably open to foreigners. Politically Ecuador has been under democratic rule since 1979. Oil has occupied a key place in recent Ecuadorian history, bringing Americans into the country in the early '70s. Ecuador has been on the dollar since 2000, making currency exchange easy.

Quito, the capital of Ecuador, was the first World Cultural Heritage Site declared by UNESCO. At 9,400 ft., it is the second highest capital in the world. The city is surrounded by snow-capped volcanoes and is just 24 kilometers from the equator. Re-built by the Spanish on the original Inca foundation, Quito is divided between the colonial architecture and sculpture of its Spanish

conquest days and the clean line of its modern section. The combination of well-preserved colonial churches and contemporary architecture makes it one of the most beautiful cities in the whole of Latin America.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Flights should be arranged to Quito, Ecuador – the Mariscal Sucre International Airport. A valid passport is necessary. The passport must have an expiration date of greater than six months after the return date and your passport must be the official passport book and not a passport card.

While no vaccinations are required to enter the country, we personally recommend Covid and booster, Hepatitis, Tetanus and Flu Shots. In addition, do not drink the tap water (bottled water is readily available). Stay clear of uncooked vegetables, salads not properly treated or unpeeled fruits. Diarrhea is the most common illness. Malaria is a small risk in the lower coastal regions. We strongly encourage you to consult your personal physician about what would be best for you.

ADDITIONAL DAYS

We cannot encourage you enough to stay additional days if time allows. We can help you arrange trips based out of Quito, private transportation, additional time at the RioQuijos EcoLodge, guided birdwatching, mountain biking down volcanoes, Galapagos trips and/or trips into the Amazon. There is so much to see and do in Ecuador. We just scratch the surface on the trip you are joining. Do not be surprised if you finish up declaring this is just the first of many visits you will make to this fascinating country!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out by phone or email. We are available seven days/week in the US to help you with planning this trip. During the time we are running trips, we are actively posting updates on Instagram and Facebook.

Endless River Adventures
14157 HWY 18 W
Bryson City, NC 28713
828-488-6199
info@endlessriveradventures.com
endlessriveradventures.com