



9-DAY ECUADOR WHITEWATER TRIP

Ecuador is a country of immense cultural wealth and geographical diversity, unmatched in the Americas. Straddling the Andes, the country features volcanoes, fantastic animals, 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 such a fascinating place to visit.

This trip explores some of the best rivers of Ecuador and immerses you in some of the most fascinating culture found in the Americas. The network of rivers falling off either side of the Andes is remarkable, making for unlimited boating possibilities in Ecuador. Our paddling time will focus on the Quijos Basin and the Tena Region. Often winding through miles of lush, high-elevation cloud-forest and rainforest, you will discover a feeling of remoteness that has been lost in other countries.

Over 25+ years, we have created trip itineraries for you that include fantastic river time, as well as cultural and scenic opportunities. We hope you will finish up a week with us feeling as if you have come to know Ecuador and want to return! Our river itineraries range from Class III+, to Class III-IV, and Class IV+. We also offer custom itineraries to accommodate paddlers, rafters, shredders and Taters. Our whitewater trips are meant to be both fun, challenging, and scenic. Ecuador is renowned for having the most diverse group of rivers to paddle in the Americas, and our itineraries take advantage of that. You will enjoy both steep, technical runs that will remind you of southeastern creek boating, and big water runs that are full of big waves continuous rapids, and fun lines. Every day you will finish up a run thinking it is your favorite, only to have it beat by the next day's run! And we supply a flexible itinerary that leaves room for changes and new opportunities.

The combination of the rivers, the scenery and the culture are what will bring you back to Ecuador time and time again. Add to such a treasure the RioQuijos EcoLodge – our riverside lodge in the Quijos Valley, and you have a trip in paradise. To visit the lodge: <http://www.rioquijosecolodge.com>

THE ITINERARY

The rivers of Ecuador are what bring you on this wonderful adventure, but it will be the culture, scenery and people who make you fall in love with the country. We take time to explore the culture with hikes to waterfalls, tours of cacao production, coffee plantations, and stops to support local businesses.

We spend the week in what is called the “Oriente” of Ecuador, splitting our time between the Quijos Valley and the Tena region. We will be dealing with elevations between 6500 feet down to 1500 feet, with scenery that changes from high elevation cloud forest to thick, humid rain forest filled with monkeys and birds, lush tropical flowers and then back to high elevation again.

On a typical day, after a delicious breakfast, we head to the river of choice for that day. Shuttles to the river are generally short and take you through local towns and landscapes. We plan on field trips after the river. This is a vacation – so if there is a day you do not feel like kayaking, there is always a raft option, hammocks on the porch, incredible bird watching and lovely trails to walk.

Dinner is a relaxed arrangement in the lodge, and the group typically meets up before dinner for beer and popcorn. There is a stocked bar at the lodge. After dinner, winding down in the lodge or retiring early to the room with a good book is the perfect end to the day. Wi-Fi is available 99% of the time (sometimes a hard rain will knock it out) and phone reception is better than many rural places in the US.

Day One (Travel Day): You fly into Ecuador’s Mariscal Sucre International Airport. Many flights arrive late in the evening/early morning, and we anticipate that. A representative of ENDLESS RIVER ADVENTURES meets you at the airport to take you to the hotel. Filtered water is available to refill your water bottle. The first and last nights accommodations in Quito are part of your trip.

Day Two: This is your day to get used to the elevation change and enjoy the sights of the capital of Ecuador. We take a city tour to some of the highlights of Old Town Quito and/or a trip to the "Mitad del Mundo"- the Middle of the World, or the equator. Plan to do some shopping today, especially if you are not spending any extra time in Ecuador. Late afternoon we will load up and drive to our lodge in the Quijos Valley. The drive is about three hours from Quito, over a 13,000-foot pass, and then down into the Quijos River Valley.

Day Three-Eight: Waking up to the sound of the river and unfamiliar song birds is part of the magic of the RioQuijos EcoLodge. After breakfast, we will outfit our boats and head out to paddle. Over the next six days, we paddle a new river every day, but also hold out the opportunity to repeat a favorite run if the group prefers. Following is some, but not all, of the rivers/sections of rivers we use on our trips. We are always on the lookout for new runs and runs not typically included in our list of rivers.

The Rio Quijos – our back yard run as the Quijos flows past the lodge. You can walk down in the mornings with a cup of coffee and enjoy the river. Like the Arkansas River, CO — the Quijos has multiple sections from Class IV+ to Class III+ - each section different from the previous and each a premier whitewater run on its own. Depending on water levels, we will enjoy multiple sections of the Quijos during the week of paddling. These sections include the Class IV+/V Cheese House Section, Class IV+ Bridge-to-Bridge Section, the Bypass Section, The Canyon, Bonbom and the Moradilla Run.

Rio Cosanga: Another favorite of the trip, the Cosanga offers multiple choices for put-ins and takeouts, giving everyone an opportunity to paddle what they feel comfortable paddling. The Town section is a Class III run that takes you through a beautiful Gorge. The Middle section is full of Class III-IV rapids that wind through boulder rapids and often are long and continuous. The Cosanga Gorge is Class III-IV/Class IV run, depending on water levels, with continuous, steep and technical rapids with big rock garden features and creek-type moves that are unusual for a river of this size. On the Canyon section, you come out at the confluence with the Quijos River and finish out your paddle with a section of the Quijos.

Mid-week, we typically depart the Quijos Valley for a completely new watershed in the Tena region. Only a three-hour drive, we drop in elevation from 6500 feet to 1500 feet and find ourselves at the gateway/stepping off point to the Amazon Jungle. The scenery changes to thick, humid rain forest filled with monkeys and birds, lush tropical flowers, and a slower pace of life. The rivers in the Tena area are second only to the Quijos Valley for the variety of rivers available for paddlers. Options include, but are not limited to, some of the following:

Upper Misahulli: 100% creek run! Steep and technical, the run is just one boof after another. If the rapids were not enough, even more exciting is coming around the corner and finding yourself floating alongside a local indigenous child coming downstream in an inner tube! The communities on the river right side of the river still speak the traditional Inca language—“Quichua” and will crowd the footbridges overhanging the river to watch you paddle by. If you could have any creek run in your backyard, this would be it.

Jatunyacu: Surfing Safari!! The ultimate big water run. At lower levels you will surf waves until your arms fall off, but because of the wide-open nature of the river, it can be paddled at very high-water levels and at such levels is an exhilarating alternative if other runs in the area are too high. As on many of the other runs we enjoy, you will paddle past scenes right out of a National Geographic.

Jondachi/Hollin: Only added to the boating list after some of the indigenous who own land on the lower Jondachi agreed to allow access into the river. Their stipulation was that they be hired to carry the boats into the river—which is well worth it when you hike down a muddy creek bed trail into a gorgeous canyon that is inaccessible from all other directions. The run begins with comfortable Class III+ creek moves, changing into big water moves once the Jondachi intersects with the Hollin. You will run out of fingers and toes to use to count the cascading waterfalls passed as you paddle downstream!

Piatua: A creek style river that is full of so many good boofs, tight moves and plenty of excitement. The Piatua comes out of the Llanganates so for that reason, we are careful about water levels as they can flash easily.

From Tena, we will return to the Quijos Valley for one more night at the lodge and one more day of paddling in the Quijos area.

Day Eight: After our final run, we load up the van and head out to Quito. A final night in Quito allows us the opportunity to enjoy a last dinner together in town. Hotel accommodations are part of the trip cost. You can plan on departing Friday evening if you are taking a red-eye.

Day Nine (travel day): Paddlers that need to get back to the States fly out. Others are highly encouraged to take time to savor the extraordinary sights of Ecuador. We are happy to help you plan out additional days in country.

PADDLING EXPERIENCE

Paddling in Ecuador adds variables not found on "backyard runs" you are used to at home. In Ecuador, river levels can fluctuate dramatically, upping the ante considerably on the runs we do. The rivers are often remote and access off the river can be limited. It is important that your skill level is suitable for the trip you are interested in. We would rather have you over-prepared for the trip rather than miss a great paddling experience. Paddlers should be comfortable paddling on new, unfamiliar runs and using hand signals and boat scouting to run the rapids. For each Class trip, we provide a list of known runs in the US that are similar skill-wise to help you assess which trip is right for you.

A note about the roll: Our trips are scheduled for later in the season — when many boaters have already called it a season at home. Come on your trip with confidence in your whitewater roll. If you have been having problems with your roll this past season, plan on spending a day or two at the pool before your trip. You will have a much better time!

GROUP SIZE

The group size for the trips is a maximum of eight paddlers with two guides. We will make every effort to match paddling skills in your group. We guarantee the group that if a paddler is not up to the minimum requirements for paddling the runs on the itinerary, we reserve the right to set up alternative plans off the river for them.

COST

A \$500.00 deposit is necessary to hold your space for the trip, with the full balance due 45 days before the trip. Our trip price includes a day in the Quito area in order to acclimate and recover from a long day of travel, six amazing days on the river, private transportation with a trusted driver, experienced river guides who know the rivers well, your choice from our selection of boats, all hotel accommodations from Friday through Friday (eight nights), and all meals during the trip.

Not included in the trip price is airfare to and from Quito, Ecuador, miscellaneous tips, adult beverages and snacks, purchases to take home, and if needed, a taxi ride to the airport on your way home.

CANCELLATION POLICY

You may cancel up to 45 days before your trip and receive a full refund. After the deadline, there is no refund available. During the trip, we are not responsible for changes or cancellations made due to extreme weather or water conditions or any other situations that may alter the trip. **We highly recommend that you buy trip insurance when you purchase your airline tickets.** We also recommend that you look into trip insurance if your health insurance does not cover you out of the country.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Flights should be arranged to Quito, Ecuador. To visit as a tourist, you will need a valid passport. The passport must have an expiration date of greater than six months after your return date.

EQUIPMENT

Boats are provided for you. Every effort will be made to equip you with the boat of your choice off our list, on a first-come, first-serve basis. Because of the difficulty of transporting boats, our selection tends to be more river runner and creek boats. The paddling gear you need to bring are your paddle, flotation bags, helmet, spray skirt, lifejacket, throw bag, and any other gear you need to be comfortable. We will provide a packing list to help you organize for the trip.

THE LOGISTICS

Even in a rural country, we believe that this is your vacation and should be defined as a relaxing, comfortable time when the only decision you make is what paddling gear to bring along for the day! We stay in hotels and lodges each night of the trip. Accommodations are chosen to set us up in comfortable, charming places to return to after a great day on the river. Meals are taken at the lodge or in 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. A note regarding meals: you are in a different country. Do not expect food to be prepared the same as at home. Dishes tend to be grilled with few sauces. We will go out of our way to accommodate special eating restrictions, but there are not things like tofu in a Latino culture— so please do not come expecting it.

YOUR TRIP LEADERS

Trip leaders are an important part of the group dynamics. We always use two trip leaders with the group. On the river, we feel that our role is to expedite the logistics of the trip and pass on our knowledge to provide you with a backup on unfamiliar rivers and specific rapids. Our role is not to second guess your paddle skills or take away from your ability to make your own choices. We are happy to look at your technique and share pointers with you on the river if you so desire.

In the words of a repeat guest/friend, *“Friendly help, camaraderie, and a long-standing future relationship is the chemistry that makes a trip with Endless River Adventures a bonding experience between trip leaders and paddling clientele.”* We are there to share your experiences on and off the river.

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.

The country is made up of virgin-forested canyons, interspersed with small farming villages. Abundant tropical flora and fauna complete the picture. Numerous species of colorful birds such as toucans and macaws can be seen in the lower elevations. Ecuador is a bird watcher's paradise! The wide variety of habitats — from tropical rain forests to windswept highlands, from 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 CAPITAL: QUITO

Quito, the capital of Ecuador, is a beautiful city. At 9,400 ft., it is surrounded by snow-capped volcanoes — just 24 kilometers from the equator. Although it was an important Indian City in Inca and pre-Inca times, its indigenous buildings have been erased, and today it is divided between the colonial

architecture and sculpture of its Spanish conquest days and the clean line of its modern section. This combination of well-preserved colonial churches and contemporary architecture makes it one of the most beautiful cities in the whole of Latin America. Quito is very urban, full of ex-patriots, and their influence is everywhere. It is a well-traveled country for Europeans and staying in Quito will be one of the highlights of your trip.

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. The Lonely Planet describes Ecuador as one of the safest to travel in South America.

SOME KEY THINGS TO KNOW

When you go on vacation in a foreign country, leave your North American time schedule behind. Life moves at a different pace in Ecuador. You will find that many times you will hurry up, just to end up waiting. Ecuadorians have a favorite saying, "manana." Remember, you are on vacation — leave your watch behind!

We will provide a packing list for you. Please do take your personal comfort into consideration when packing. Laundry service is available during the week.

To visit as a tourist, all you need is a valid passport. The expiration date on your passport must be six months after your travel dates. You should always carry a passport or photograph or it. A passport card will not work traveling internationally.

No vaccinations are required to enter the country. Viruses carried from home and a bit of diarrhea are the most common illnesses. Altitude sickness (*soroche*) can sometimes affect travelers arriving in Quito. Andean air is thin, so take it easy for the first day. We personally recommend Hepatitis, Tetanus and Flu Shots. In addition, we recommend you not drink the tap water; bottled water is readily available. Stay clear of uncooked vegetables, salads not properly treated or unpeeled fruits. Malaria and dengue are a small risk in the lower coastal regions. We strongly encourage you to consult your personal physician about what would be best for you.

MONEY

Plan on bringing your money in small bills (\$5 and \$10 bills). It is difficult to find change for large bills (and a \$20 is considered large on the street!). Major credit cards are accepted in larger hotels, restaurants, and shops in Quito. It is not a problem to access ATM's during the week. Tips are not expected, but are greatly appreciated.

COMMUNICATION

If you need to stay in touch with those at home, cell phone service and WIFI is exceptionally good in Ecuador, but check with your carrier about an international plan before you depart.

WHAT TO DO WITH EXTRA DAYS

Ecuador offers such a great diversity that we cannot possibly acquaint you with it all in your days of paddling. We highly encourage you to spend some extra time touring Ecuador's fascinating sites. Options to get you started include: time in Quito with its churches and museums and great places to just "hang out," the Galapagos Islands, climbing Volcano Cotopaxi or Chimborazo, Amazon Jungle Tour, bike trips from Cotopaxi, visiting Banos and the Otavalo Market. We are happy to help you plan out additional days in Ecuador.