



## Ecuador Tours

- Quito and Surrounding Areas
  - The Amazon Jungle
  - The Spirit of the Andes
  - The Galapagos Islands

# Quito and Surrounding Areas

**4 nights / 5 days**

## **DAY 1: QUITO**

Upon arrival in Quito a guide will greet you and will transfer you to the hotel for four nights' accommodation.

## **DAY 2: QUITO**

Today you will spend the day exploring Quito's historic center on a guided city tour. Quito, situated in a circle of mountainous peaks, is the world's second highest capital located in one of the most magnificent settings in the world. Designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1978, Quito boasts one of the finest colonial centers in Latin America.

Later, you will visit the Middle of the World Monument, located 14 miles north of Quito. Located exactly at latitude 0°0'0", it is possible to stand in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres at the same time. The adjoining museum is dedicated to Ecuador's various indigenous groups.

## **DAY 3: QUITO – OTAVALO – QUITO**

Today you will visit the town of Otavalo, home to South America's most famous indigenous fair and market. Your excursion, which includes shared transportation and guide, focuses on the large native market at Otavalo as it overflows into the central streets of its namesake town, filled with vendors of textiles and a variety of other crafts.

The tour begins with an early departure from Quito through dramatic mountain scenery before arriving at Otavalo. You will have ample time to visit the famous market and stroll along the narrow cobblestone streets with many stalls full of ponchos, scarves, blankets, wall hangings, woven belts (fajas), hats, handbags and

much more. Here Otavaleños barter in silence, in marked contrast to the raucous noise of other markets; take your time to negotiate the best bargains.

## **DAY 4: QUITO – MINDO CLOUD FOREST – QUITO**

A guide will greet you at your hotel for the start of your privately guided excursion to the Mindo Cloud Forest. The Valley of Mindo is located within the protected Mindo-Nambillo forest. The 48,000 acre forest stretches over the slopes of the Pichincha Volcano and covers diverse ecosystems ranging from cloud-high, treeless plateau (known locally as paramo) through subtropical forest to tropical jungle. A brief stop is made at the rim of the crater of the extinct Pululahua Volcano prior to descending into the Valley of Mindo.

Today's tour includes a specially trained naturalist guide who will point out the unique flora and fauna of the cloud forest with visits to the El Pahuma Orchid Reserve and the Orchid Botanical Garden, a jungle hike through the cloud forest including a visit to the Pacaya waterfall included. You will also visit the village of Mindo with lunch included prior to returning to Quito.

## **DAY 5: QUITO**

A guide will greet you at your hotel and will transfer you to the airport in time to check in for and to board your outbound flight.

### **INCLUDED**

- All land transfers
- Four (4) nights in Quito
- Excursions as described
- Daily breakfast and some other meals

# The Amazon Jungle

## **3, 4 and 7 night packages available**

**Magic Tours & Travel** offers a number of interesting and compelling tour packages in the Amazon Jungle, ideal for nature lovers and birding enthusiasts. Here, visitors have a number of tour packages to choose from, including numerous first rate jungle lodges and river cruises. Tour packages are designed to optimize visitors' exposure to Amazon Jungle with transportation, accommodation, meals and daily guided excursions in the rainforest included.

**Magic Tours & Travel** recommends the following jungle lodges:

- Sacha Lodge
- La Selva Jungle Lodge
- The Napo Wildlife Center
- The Manatee River Cruise

For a truly first class experience, we strongly recommend the deluxe Mashpi Jungle Lodge!

All tour packages include transportation (land and water), domestic flights as required, three meals daily + snacks, drinking water, coffee and tea, as well as daily guided excursions in the jungle lead by expert naturalist guides.

Please contact us directly and let us find the perfect jungle tour package for you!

# The Spirit of the Andes

**3 nights / 4 days**

## **DAY 1: QUITO – COTOPAXI NATIONAL PARK - PATATE**

Today you will begin a remarkable journey along the spine of the Andes known as the Spirit of the Andes, a three day immersion in the Andean World traveling from Quito all the way south to Cuenca!

Early this morning you will depart Quito traveling by motorcar south along the Pan-American Highway for a visit to the Cotopaxi National Park. The park is an ecological sanctuary spreading out some 88,920 acres around the magnificent Cotopaxi Volcano which rises 5897 meters (19,347 feet) above sea level. The evergreen landscape of the Ecuadorian highlands is one of the main attractions, along valleys and mountains covered by multicolored fields.

Upon arrival you will enjoy an introductory briefing at the park's interpretation center where you will learn more about the habitat of the Andean paramo, or moorlands, its flora and its fauna. Enjoy an up close view of the Andean landscape as you look out for some of the areas local wildlife including high altitude birds and wild horses congregating around the Limpiopungo Lagoon.

Lunch is served at a local hacienda from which you may enjoy spectacular views of the Cotopaxi Volcano (weather permitting). After lunch enjoy some free time to explore the hacienda on your own, to stroll along a rose plantation, to mingle with the llamas and to enjoy the views of the Andes.

From here you will continue by motor car to Patate where accommodation is for one night in a 300 year old hacienda hidden among the mountains creating a truly magical ambience.

## **DAY 2: PATATE – RIOBAMBA**

After breakfast at the hacienda you will continue your journey by road along the Pastaza River Gorge to the town of Baños, located at the foot of the Tungurahua Volcano. The route takes you to the Cascades of El Pailon del Diablo (the Devil's Cauldron) where the most adventurous will descend by foot (medium difficulty walk) to observe the impressive cascade up close, surrounded by subtropical vegetation and orchids. The force and sound of the waters can also be appreciated from a lookout point without descending down to the falls for those not interested in the hike.

Lunch is included at a local hacienda with some free time this afternoon to explore the town of Baños, a town with an international pulse, full of people from all over the world as well as many locals who pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of the Virgin of Holy Water.

Next, the route leads upwards to where the clouds can be touched, alongside the massive Chimborazo Volcano, the highest mountain in Ecuador. The hillsides are multicolored by farmers' crops with vicuñas scampering and grazing along the mountains. The picturesque scenery provides for spectacular photo opportunities.

Later, you will arrive in Riobamba for dinner and lodging.

## **DAY 3: RIOBAMBA – CUENCA**

After breakfast you will continue along the winding route twisting and turning along bridging ravines and river gorges en route to the town of Alausi. Travel through native villages and cultivated fields where most of the country's cereals are grown including: quinoa, considered by many as the perfect grain for its nutritional value and high energy yields.

At Alausi, the beating heart of the rehabilitation of the Ecuadorian Railway Company in the last few years, you will board the train for a truly spectacular and

brehtaking journey through the Andes. The highlight of your journey is the thrilling 800 meter (2630 foot) descent along the zigzag cuttings into the side of the mountain known as the Devil's Nose. Upon reaching the bottom you will find the newly renovated Sibambe Station, the local Condor Puñuna Museum built by the Nizag community and a small market with local handcrafts, fruit and medicinal plants as well as delicious local coffee.

After free time to explore the area on your own the train whistle will call passengers back for the return leg of the journey back to Alausi where a light snack is served to regain strength prior to continuing on with your journey.

The journey continues south to the Inca archaeological remains of Ingapirca, Kichwa for Inca Wall. Enjoy a guided visit the former Inca center prior to enjoying a hearty lunch in the area and continuing all the way to your hotel in Cuenca for one night's accommodation with dinner and breakfast included.

## **DAY 4: CUENCA**

This morning you will join your guide for a guided city tour of Cuenca with lunch included.

Cuenca is Ecuador's third largest city; yet it still retains its pleasant provincial air. Its red tiled roofs, cobblestone streets, flowery plazas and museums make it very special. This comprehensive visit includes the Plaza of San Sebastian, a colorful artisans' market, where handicrafts are sold. Then, visit the Museum of Modern Art, featuring an excellent collection of contemporary fine art. Next is a visit to the flower market at the small plaza in front of the carved stone entrance to the church of El Carmen de la Asunción.

From here, enjoy a stroll to the main square, surrounded by the imposing blue-domed Cathedral, the Court of Justice, the Municipal Palace, the Governor's Palace and the Church of El Sagrario. Then, a drive along the Tomebamba River to admire the city's riverbank houses is included.

Lunch is included at one of the excellent restaurants in Cuenca, and in the afternoon, a short drive visits a ceramics handcraft shop, followed by a visit to a Panama Hat factory to observe the whole process of making the famous hats of high-quality toquilla straw.

The Spirit of the Andes adventure ends at the airport where you will board your flight to Quito or Guayaquil.

**INCLUDED:**

- All land transfers
- Domestic flight between Cuenca and Quito/Guayaquil
- One (1) night in Patate
- One (1) night in Riobamba
- One (1) nights in Cuenca
- Excursions as described
- Daily breakfast and some other meals



# The Galapagos Islands

## **Cruises, Island Hopping and Land Accommodations available**

The number one destination for visitors to Ecuador are the Galapagos Islands, and for good reason. The Galapagos Islands, isolated in the Pacific Ocean, form one enormous National Park and protected area and are home to a number of marine and land flora and fauna. Visitors can choose between stay put hotel accommodation packages, island hopping tours or one of the more traditional Galapagos Cruise packages. Avid divers may even choose diving-specific cruises. The Galapagos Islands are a truly a paradise for nature lovers and soft adventure enthusiasts and are strongly recommend for anyone considering a trip to Ecuador.

The majority of visitors to the Galapagos Islands choose to explore the archipelago by way of a cruise, which, according to us, provides the most complete tour package available. Cruises range in duration from three nights all the way to fourteen nights on a variety of ships, yachts, and catamarans.

**Magic Tours & Travel** recommends the following Galapagos cruise options:

- **La Pinta Yacht** – 48 guests- Designed for the ultimate luxury adventure in the Galapagos Islands, the Yacht La Pinta offers intense days of wildlife exploration lead by expert bilingual naturalist guides while providing a haven for tranquility and relaxation on board. La Pinta expertly combines adventure with luxury for a truly unforgettable experience.
- **MV Santa Cruz** – 90 guests- The Santa Cruz is unique in that it is the only ship designed specifically for cruising the Galapagos Islands. The ship boasts warm, friendly staff, and experienced naturalist guides combined with all of the amenities of a large cruise ship. Experience the Galapagos Islands like never before with the MV Santa Cruz.
- **MV Galapagos Legend** – 90 guests- This first class vessel offers all of the amenities of a large cruise ship combined with the class and personal touch one would expect to find on a much smaller ship. On board and in the

islands expert bilingual naturalist guides and friendly staff will ensure that visitors enjoy their stay and leave Galapagos truly fulfilled.

- **Coral I & Coral II** – 36 & 20 guests, respectively- The sister ships known as Coral I and Coral II, offering accommodation for 36 and 20 guests, offer the ideal combination of class and style in the comfort of an intimate, small ship setting. Available connecting cabins are ideal for family vacations. The Jacuzzi as well as the sun and shadow decks are ideal for relaxing on your time off.
- **Tip Top Fleet**– 16 passengers per yacht- From the Rolf Wittmer family, pioneers in the Galapagos Islands and in the Galapagos tourism market, comes the Tip Top Fleet: Tip Top I, II and III. The sister ships offer first class accommodation and services combined with over 28 years of experience in the market. The Tip Top ships are great for small groups or for individuals looking for a first rate experience.
- **Archipel Catamaran** – 16 guests- The Archipel Catamaran offers both space and comfort with the stability and speed expected from a catamaran. The ship offers comfort both in and out and is one of the best catamaran options in the islands with eight double occupancy cabins, a comfortable dining room, library, indoor bar, an outdoor bar on the upper deck and a spacious tanning deck with reclining chairs.

All tour packages include transportation (land and water), domestic flights as required, three meals daily + snacks, drinking water, coffee and tea, as well as daily guided excursions in the jungle lead by expert naturalist guides.

Please note: The above mentioned ships are just some of our recommended cruises. **Magic Tours & Travel** does not work with any cruise company exclusively so please contact us directly and let us find the perfect Galapagos Islands tour package for you!