

## ECUADOR - ECUADOR ENCOUNTERS



### TRIP CODE

ECTSEEC

### DURATION

14 Days

### LOCATIONS

Ecuador, Amazon



## INTRODUCTION

Spend some quality time in Ecuador and embrace the Andean way of life through this 14 day itinerary. Explore the capital city of Quito and visit the bustling market of Otavalo, well-known for its handicrafts before you embrace the volcanic vistas of the Andes. Escape to the Amazonian Rainforest and engage with nature before ending your adventure by relaxing in the hot springs near Cuenca.

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1: Arrival transfer in Quito

On arrival, please make your way through to the Arrivals Hall where our representative will be waiting for you to transfer you to your hotel. This service includes a driver and local English speaking guide, who will provide you with any useful information needed for your stay. He/she will be holding a sign with your name on it. Should you not be able to locate them, please refer to the front of your itinerary for emergency contact details of our representative office.



NO IMAGE  
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### DAY 1: Quito

Sitting at 2,850 metres above sea level high in the Andean foothills lies Quito, the capital of Ecuador. The city, a short distance from the Equator and with an amazing backdrop of snow-capped mountains, is known for its stunning colonial architecture and art-work. Founded in the 16th century on the ruins of an Inca city, Quito has one of the largest, least-altered and best-preserved historic centres in the Americas. It was declared a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site in 1978.



### DAY 2: Full Day Quito City Tour with Middle of the World

Commence a colonial city tour of Quito exploring the bustling streets and squares of the largest historical old town in the Americas. Visit some of its most important churches such as the majestic La Compañía and iconic San Francisco which have stunning multi-ethnic designs and cultural heritage. We then travel by road to the Equatorial Monument, 25km (16 miles) north of Quito, which marks the exact middle of the World, Latitude 0°, where you can stand with a foot on each hemisphere. A certificate for having crossed the Equator is issued to each guest! The surrounding, volcanic scenery is stunning and you can choose to either visit the Ethnographic Museum or the Inti Ñan Museum, both located near the site of the monument.



### DAY 3: Otavalo Indian Market and Cotacachi

Today we will head to Otavalo's Indian Market, located on the Plaza de Ponchos and nestled in a valley under Imbabura Volcano. Explore the open-air market, well known for its typical crafts and textiles, including brightly woven Alpaca scarves and tapestries woven with indigenous designs, as well as embroidered blouses, tagua-nut jewelry and more! Continue to Cotacachi, an indigenous town at the foothills of Cotacachi Volcano and famous for its high-quality leather goods at bargain prices. In the afternoon, browse the shops or market for leather handbags, jackets, boots, belts, wallets and shoes.



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## DAY 4: Antisana Volcano Visit

After breakfast we depart for the eastern range of the Andes and Antisana. Here we will get to see the beautiful Lake Mica and the majestic Antisana Volcano. This volcano stands at a height of 5,758m. and is part of the Condor Bio reserve. It is the fourth largest volcano in Ecuador. Antisana is believed to have the most challenging mountaineering trail in the Andes.



## DAY 5: Quilotoa Crater Visit

Today we will head to Quilotoa Lake, on route you can stop in Tigua, a small town where you can find amazing handicrafts made by animal skins and beautiful and colourful masks that represent some local animals. Finally we will arrive to Quilotoa Lake. Walk down from the border of the crater to arrive to the lake (subject to weather conditions). You will enjoy a delicious box lunch on this wonderful setting.



## DAY 6: Cotopaxi National Park Private

Today you are going to visit the Cotopaxi National Park, an ecological sanctuary of 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. After an hour and a half, the entrance to the park is reached and then it's up a dirt road for approximately one hour. Upon arrival to the park there is an introductory briefing about the habitat of the Andean paramo or moorlands, its flora and fauna in the small Interpretation Center. Continue on to Limpiopungo Lagoon to observe a variety of birds and occasionally wild horses. On clear days, the Cotopaxi Volcano is the magnificent backdrop. A short walk around the lagoon allows the observation of the Andean flora. Lunch and entrance fee to Cotopaxi National Park not included.



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### DAY 7: Depart Quito

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### DAY 7: Depart from Quito to the lodge

After arrival at Quito International airport you will be met by our representative who will assist you in check in and assist you on your 30 minute flight to Coca. On arrival at Coca you will then board a motorized canoe which will take you two hours down the scenic Amazon toward La Selva's dock. please note on arrival at Coca your main luggage will be handled by staff and meet you at La Selva. If you wish to take any personal items please pack them into a small backpack for the canoe journey.



### DAY 7: Welcome to the Amazon

La Selva Lodge have a set of activities where you can choose from onsite, allowing you to create your own personalised experience deep in the Amazon. Below are suggested options you may like to choose from through-out your stay. You may start with an introduction to the rainforest. One of our naturalist guides is going to give you basic information about the tropical rain forest, Amazonia and the operation area of La Selva Lodge. The idea is to begin the activities with some background information about the amazing place that you have just arrived. You may also undertake the Matapalo Trail. This trail was named after the Spanish name of the famous Strangler fig (Ficus sp) one of many remarkable trees that you will find during this short introductory walk. We also see a majestic Mahogany tree that has been in the area for more than 400 years. Here your native and naturalist guides will start to share with you part of their knowledge about flora and fauna of the tropical rain forest. Because of the time of the day, you will enjoy of the most amazing light and the transition of the activity between diurnal and nocturnal creatures.



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### DAY 8: Discover Amazon Trails

La Selva Lodge have a set of activities where you can choose from onsite, allowing you to create your own personalised experience deep in the Amazon. Below are suggested options you may like to choose from through-out your stay. In the morning you may visit the rainforest canopy tower. After a 20 minutes' walk, you reach the tower. This amazing construction will allow you to be at 120 feet above the forest floor, and enjoy of the most amazing scenery of the canopy of the tropical rain forest. With the help of a spotting telescope your guides will show to you the colorful birds from the canopy including toucans, tanagers and parrots and with luck, the famous howler monkeys or a sloth. In the way back to the lodge you make a hike that is going to take you around 2 hours. During this time our native guide is going to show you some of the medicinal plants that they still use and the naturalist will provide information about ecology and natural history. In the afternoon you may undertake the Charapa Trail. This trail lasting one and a half hours, starts at the back of the lodge and ends on the edge of the lake. It's a wonderful loop that begins with a walk, returning to the lodge by canoe. Along the way we will try to sight different groups of mammals, monkeys and birds that in the afternoon hours get close to the lakeshore to look for food. Apart from a clear afternoon, you can also enjoy a beautiful sunset from the canoe.



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### DAY 9: Discover Amazon Trails

La Selva EcoLodge have a set of activities where you can choose from onsite, allowing you to create your own personalised experience deep in the Amazon. Below are suggested options you may like to choose from through-out your stay. In the morning you will set off to see the spectacular parrot clay lick. A short canoe ride will see you headed back toward the Napo River. The motorised canoe ride will let you enjoy one of the most amazing natural wildlife displays in all South America. Hundreds of parrots and parakeets will approach the treetops and later will come down to a clay bank to eat this soil rich in minerals. It is essential to have binoculars to enjoy it. Once you identify the different species of parrots and parakeets, your naturalist guide will provide a lot of interesting information about this spectacular behaviour. The motorized canoe ride will continue for approximately 30 more minutes of bird watching along the river banks. You may also choose to see the cultural offerings of the Amazon. An Amazonian Kichua woman will receive you on their community centre to explain to you about the life of the kichuas in Amazonia. A visit to the garden “chacra” followed by a visit to the house is going to show you that part of the Amazonia that you do not find on the maps: the Amazon people. Here you will have a deeply enriching and authentic look into the lives of these Amazonian communities. Share stories, learn of Amazonian lifestyles or even purchase handicrafts to take back in grateful reflection of this unique experience. In the evening you may take part on a nocturnal trail walk. Here you will have the unique opportunity to enjoy the mysterious sounds of the nocturnal creatures at night. Perhaps you may even spot some of these unique species. Following these activities you will receive an evening departure briefing, providing you all the necessary information about your departure proceedings for the following morning.

### DAY 10: Departure Day

In accordance with your last night briefing, you will have an early wake up call, breakfast and departure from the lodge. The lodge staff will assist you with your checked luggage. Motorized canoe ride upstream to go back to Coca, where our representative will take you to the airport to help you with your checked luggage and boarding passes.

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### DAY 10: Arrival transfer in Quito

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### DAY 11: Depart Quito

You will be collected from your hotel at the appropriate time and transferred to the airport for your onward flight.



### DAY 11: Cuenca Private Transfer Airport - Hotel with guide

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### DAY 11: Cuenca: Full Day Private City Tour

Breakfast in the morning prepares you for a city tour of Cuenca, considered by many the most beautiful city in all of Ecuador. Our walk will include a visit to the flower market, the cathedral, Calderon Park, the church of La Merced and its convent, among other attractions



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### DAY 12: Gualaceo and Chordeleg Visit

The valley of Gualaceo is 22 miles (36 kilometers) from Cuenca, at an elevation of 7,446 feet (2,370 meters) above sea level. The ride starts along the Santa Ana valley and then high in the mountains, through very scenic landscapes, which change at every curb. A stop is made at the small town of San Bartolome where guitars are hand made and artistically finished and Chordeleg, a small town with many stores selling jewelry in gold and silver. Past the village of Gualaceo, drive along the banks of the river, lined with weeping willows; arrive at Bulcay where the weavers produce the finest shawls and scarves using backstrap looms and the technique of ikat, where the threads are tie-dyed to form specific designs before weaving. Then visit an orchid garden with over 2500 species.



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### DAY 13: Cuenca: Private Transfer Hotel - Airport

You will be collected from your hotel at the appropriate time and transferred to the airport for your onward flight.



### DAY 13: Arrival transfer in Quito

On arrival, please make your way through to the Arrivals Hall where our representative will be waiting for you to transfer you to your hotel. This service includes a driver and local English speaking guide, who will provide you with any useful information needed for your stay. He/she will be holding a sign with your name on it. Should you not be able to locate them, please refer to the front of your itinerary for emergency contact details of our representative office.





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### DAY 14: Depart Quito

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## INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Deluxe
Inclusions	Daily breakfast and meals as detailed in the itinerary Transfers & excursions with bilingual speaking guide Accommodaton in 5* properties with private facilities Box Lunch on Day 4 during the Antisana Volcano Visit
Difficulty Rating	1 (easy)
Single Surcharge	Available Upon Request
Notes	Contact us for more details
Price Dependent upon	Season and Availability

## SUSTAINABILITY

Chimu Adventures undertakes a number of sustainability measures within its operations including:

- 1) Only using local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you’re visiting.
- 2) Where possible, using locally owned and operated boutique hotels to maximise the return to the local community.
- 3) Chimu’s “Pass it on” programme has provided funding to hundreds of local community projects in Latin America. Our aim is to empower local communities, helping them to develop their own infrastructure for the future. Since 2006, we have been working with Kiva (a well-known Non-Governmental Organisation), providing hundreds of loans to local businesses all over South America.

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4) In our pre tour information we provide a range of tips and advice on how to minimise your impact on both local environments and communities.

5) Chimu Adventures’ offices also take a number of sustainability measures including carbon offsets for company vehicles and most staff travel. Chimu Adventure’s internal processes are also structures to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are also internal programmes to help staff minimise their carbon footprint such as our staff bike purchase assistance plan which encourages office staff to commute to work via bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.

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