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TRIP CODE
ECLTSIGE
DEPARTURE
Daily
DURATION
9 Days
LOCATIONS
Ecuador

INTRODUCTION

On this trip you will discover the magic of Ecuador, travelling overland from Quito to Guayaquil. Start your trip in Quito, with a stay in a boutique hotel in the old town. Travel to Cotopaxi and Chimborazo NP and enjoy the stunning scenery and then continue into the highlands to explore Riobamba and Cuenca. A highlight of the trip will be a visit to the indigenous town of Saraguro where you will enjoy a weaving workshop before having lunch at Shamuico. The head chef Samuel Ortega is a native from Saraguro who spent several years in Spain, where he studied gastronomy and worked at many high-end restaurants.

If you would like to explore more of Ecuador this tour can easily be combined with a trip to the Galapagos, Amazon or Ecuadorian Cloud Forest.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival in Quito



You will arrive in the city of Quito, the capital of Ecuador. The city is situated 2,850 metres above sea level within the Andean foothills and is known for its snow-capped mountain backdrop, colonial architecture and artwork. Once part of the Incan Empire, Quito has been declared a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site thanks to its well-preserved historic centre. Transfer to your boutique hotel, located in the old town and you're free to explore on your arrival.

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DAY 2: Quito Six Senses Tour

Today you will enjoy a tour of the charming city of Quito. The tour will tick off all of the main sites, including Independence Square, the Government Palace, the busy street of La Ronda and some of the beautiful baroque churches that the city is famous for. You will also enjoy a range of experiences. These will vary depending on the day and the time of year, but can include things like market visits, empanada or ice cream making (and tasting), working with an artisan to make your own Panama hat or even helping to restore colonial art! Your tour will end with a cocktail at a rooftop bar where you will have the perfect view over the old town and Panecillo hill. (B)



DAY 3: Cotopaxi National Park

Today you will head south from Quito to visit Cotopaxi National Park. Cotopaxi is the highest active volcano in the world. Despite the altitude, the park is home to numerous birds and varied plant life. Weather permitting, there are spectacular views from the north face of the mountain. The surrounding scenery includes volcanoes like Pasochoa, Ruminahui and Sincholagua. You will also have the opportunity to visit a local indigenous market. At the end of the tour you will transfer to your charming Hacienda accommodation nearby for an overnight. (B, L)



DAY 4: Chimborazo National Park

Enjoy an excursion to Chimborazo National Park, a sanctuary of Ecuador's natural beauty. Witness the imposing presence of Chimborazo volcano and explore the park's history at the Visitor Center. Ascend to the Andean highlands for panoramic views of snow-capped peaks and pristine lakes, guided by an expert naturalist. Conclude your day with a transfer to your hotel in Riobamba and overnight. (B)



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DAY 5: Riobamba to Cuenca

Enjoy a scenic drive to Alausi, stopping at the historic 'Balbanera' Church, Ecuador's first Catholic church dating back to 1534. Continue to the charming village of Guamote, visiting the Inti Sisa community's educational center. Here, delve into the traditional art of weaving as a local artisan demonstrates the intricate process of crafting ponchos from sheep and alpaca wool. Gain insight into the daily lives of mountain-dwelling communities by stepping into an authentic Andean house, or Choza. After a picturesque 45-minute drive, arrive in Alausi to enjoy panoramic views from San Pedro hill and a folkloric presentation, followed by a leisurely stroll through the Valley. Continuing onwards to Cuenca, marvel at the awe-inspiring Inca Ruins of Ingapirca, a remarkable fortress blending Inca and Cañari architecture. Arrive into Cuenca, and check into your boutique hotel. This evening immerse yourself in the cities vibrant cultural tapestry. (B,L)



DAY 6: Cuenca

Take a city tour of Cuenca, starting your day with the breathtaking views from the Turi viewpoint. Wander through the picturesque 'Barranco' district, lined with terraced houses along the Tomebamba River, before delving into the rich cultural heritage of the city at the Pumapungo Museum. Witness the artistry behind Panama hat crafting at a local factory, where 'Paja toquilla' fiber hats are intricately made. Explore Cuenca's Historical district, discovering vibrant markets, the grand 'New Cathedral,' and the timeless beauty of Colonial and Republican architecture in the main square. (B)



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DAY 7: Saraguro & Pucara

Departing Cuenca, traverse through the Andes and enjoy the tranquil beauty of rural villages, expansive cattle farms, and quaint farmlands. Upon reaching Saraguro visit the quaint and traditional village of Guera. Here, you'll gain insights into local culture with a visit to a charming house museum, sampling the region's typical drink, 'Uahango.' Continuing your exploration, visit Pucara, a historically significant site revered for its strategic importance as both a war observatory and spiritual sanctuary. Marvel at the sweeping vistas of the Yunguilla Valley. Return to Saraguro to explore the region's rich textile heritage at a traditional workshop, where skilled artisans demonstrate intricate loom techniques. The highlight of today will be lunch at Shamuico restaurant, led by Chef Samuel Ortega, a Saraguro native with extensive culinary expertise garnered from Spain. (B,L)



DAY 8: Cuenca to Guayaquil via Cajas NP

Following a hearty breakfast, venture northwest towards the captivating expanse of Cajas National Park. Upon arrival, a plethora of activities awaits, including invigorating hikes,immersive bird-watching experiences and tranquil lakeside walks. Marvel at the diverse flora and fauna. A highlight of the park visit is exploring the Interpretation Center nestled beside La Toreadora Lake. Your journey continues towards the vibrant city of Guayaquil, with travelers treated to breathtaking mountain scenery and delightful transitions in vegetation as we approach the enchanting Ecuadorian coastline, promising a sensory feast for all. On arrival check into your hotel and the rest of the day is yours to relax or explore.



DAY 9: Depart Guayaquil

Take the included shuttle from your hotel to the airport in time for your onward departure.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Hotels
Inclusions	**Inclusions** Private transfers throughout with a local driver and/or guide Shared transfer from Mindo to Quito Accommodation with breakfast daily Other meals where stated Sightseeing with local English-speaking guide as detailed in the itinerary Small group sightseeing while in Mindo at Jungle Lodge **Exclusions** International and internal flights not indicated Visa and reciprocity fees (if applicable) Travel Insurance Beverages unless otherwise specified Personal expenses Gratuities for tour guides/drivers Any items not mentioned as included
Difficulty Rating	2 (Light Adventure)
Single Surcharge	A single supplement surcharge applies and is subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.
Notes	Prices are based on per person, twin share. Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time. All entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice.
Price Dependent upon	Seasonality, currency fluctuation, and availability at time of booking.

SUSTAINABILITY

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