

Exploring Ecuador, The Amazon & the Galapagos Islands – 16 Days

Day 01: Fly to Ecuador

Fly from London.

Day 02: Arrival in Quito

Arrival in Quito and transfer to Hostal Sierra Nevada. Meeting with your guide and briefing of the following days activities. You will then depart to the colonial side of the city to visit the narrow streets, colonial houses, the traditional squares and opulent churches. Afterwards you will drive to El Panecillo, a lookout point which offers overwhelming views of the city and its surrounding mountains. Dinner is free in Quito to choose among the many cafes and restaurants.

Day 03: Equator & Hike in Pululahua

This morning we will head to “La Mitad del Mundo” where the Equator Monument is located and you can jump between hemispheres! After a visit to the nearby Inca ruins of Rumicucho you will hike into the Pululahua crater, a geo-botanical reserve in the huge crater of an extinct volcano. Overnight camping at the hostel in the world’s only inhabited volcano crater. **B/L/D**

Day 04: Yumbo Trail - Quito

Today you will take a hike through the wide landscape of Pululahua. The trip will take us from areas of traditional Andean agriculture to lush tropical vegetation, passing by eroded volcanic avalanches blooming with wild orchids, cloud forests, deep gorges and clear mountain streams. We will also find prehistoric ruins and interesting geological formations along our way. We get a good impression of the present and past of the country life in Ecuador, of its geology and botany, but most of all we'll discover the pleasure of exploring the Andes! In the afternoon we return to Quito. **B/L/_**

Day 05: Flight Quito - Coca – Shiripuno River Lodge

In the morning transfer to the airport to catch national flight to “Coca” in the Amazon basin. On arrival at “Coca” ride by private transportation along the Napo river. After lunch, navigate downstream on the Napo river by motorized canoe. On the way we have the opportunity to see many birds and sometimes parrots, toucans and also monkeys. Late afternoon arrival at our jungle lodge on the banks of the Shiripuno river, followed by dinner. **B/L/D**

Day 06: Shiripuno River

We will take an early morning rowing tour in a canoe on the Shiripuno river to observe birds and mammals. After breakfast, there will be a walk in the jungle accompanied by a native guide. We have the chance to learn about the flora and fauna and Huaorani culture and the use of their various medicinal plants. Lunch is at the lodge followed by piranha fishing and observation of caimans. **B/L/D**

Day 07: Shiripuno River

There will be another early morning excursion in search of mammals, especially monkeys, followed by a hearty breakfast. Then we will take a hike in the forest, where our guide will explain more about the complex system of the rain forest. Lunch at the lodge is followed by a blowpipe competition followed by sports and bathing in the river. After dinner will be a night walk in the forest to observe insects and other nocturnal animals. **B/L/D**

Day 08: Shiripuno River

Today we will make further explorations of the rainforest with morning and evening hikes following new trails, which reveal different aspects of the jungle. On the final afternoon a soccer match between Ecuador and England provides a fun way to end the stay. **B/L/D**

Day 09: Shiripuno River Lodge - Coca – Flight Quito

After breakfast depart by motorized canoe. We will visit an Indian community, which will be a very interesting cultural experience and have a Box Lunch before continuing to Coca and then returning by plane to Quito. You are free for Dinner. **B/-/-**

Day 10: Cotopaxi - Quito

After breakfast we drive South, passing Machachi el Chaupi and Lasso to the Saquisilí Indigenous Market. The Market is one of the most interesting Indian Markets in Ecuador, as you can see the natives in their typical and very colourful dresses of course selling their products and also their animals like Lamas, guinea pigs, rabbits, donkeys etc. Continuing your travel through the “Avenue of the volcanoes” will bring you to Cotopaxi National Park. You will make a stop at the visitor centre Campamento Mariscal Sucre to visit the natural history museum. After that you drive to the lagoon Limpiopungo. Here you have a spectacular view of the gigantic volcanic cone of Cotopaxi during a hike around the lagoon. After hiking over the high plain you will have lunch at the rustic mountain refuge Tambopaxi on the high plateau with great and close-up views of Cotopaxi. **B/L**

Day 11: San Cristóbal - Interpretation Center – Snorkeling Predial

In the morning you fly from Quito to the Galapagos Island of San Cristobal. Upon disembarking from the airplane in San Cristobal, you will go immediately to the Galapagos immigration area. Here you will need to present your passport and pay your USD 100 Galapagos National Park fee. This payment must be made in cash as the National Park Service does not accept Traveler’s Checks or credit cards. Once the Park officials have completed the check-in you exit the immigration area and you will be met by your tour guide who will take you to the Hotel Mar Azul Anexo.

Afterwards you will hike to the San Cristobal Interpretation Center, located in a natural setting, where visitors can obtain information that will help them understand more about the natural history of the Galápagos, with a great emphasis on human history and conservation. In the afternoon you will have the opportunity to swim and snorkel on the northern side of the bay where a perfect spot for these activities is located. Accommodation at the Hotel. **B/L/D**

Day 12: Hacienda El Cafetal – Galapaguera – Hacienda Augustina - Lobería

In the morning you will visit the coffee plantation El Cafetal where you will learn how the coffee is produced and you can also taste the coffee. Afterwards you will continue to the Galapaguera, a project to introduce the local endemic Giant Tortoise back into the wild. Here you can observe these giants and get to know the typical flora of the island during your walk through the little reserve. After lunch in the typical highland Hacienda Augustina you will walk from Puerto Baquerizo Moreno through the typical dry forest of this area to the beach “la Lobería” where you can observe the sea iguanas and swim with the local sea lion colony. **B/L/D**

Day 13: Island Lobos / Island San Cristobal - Sleeping Leon – Cerro Brujo

Early in the morning you will embark for Lobos Islet which is a seasonal nesting location for the blue footed booby, although the basalt island outcropping is named for the sealions colony that lives there. Lobos Islet is located heading up the coast from Wreck Bay and Puerto Baquerizo north of San Cristobal Island also known as Chatham, 1 hour across a small channel. After a one hour hike over the island you will continue by boat to the Island Santa Cruz to Puerto Ayora, a little harbour that is quite popular with sailors as well as with sealions and pelicans. After having checked into your hotel you will drive into the highlands passing through the agricultural zone, near the National Park boundary, the Miconia Zone and then on to the Fern and Sedge zone. With clear weather (unpredictable) this area affords beautiful scenes of rolling hills and extinct volcanic cones covered with grass and lush greenery all year round. At the end of the path you will find the Hacienda Primicias the home to many turtles, where you will have lunch. In the surrounding of the hacienda you can find a lava tunnel which you will explore. In the afternoon you return to Puerto Ayora and hike to the Tortuga Bay. There you can spot several species of finches. The sunsets here are excellent. The west cove offers a nice snorkelling and swimming area and a nice spot for relaxing. The white sand beach is considered by many the nicest of the archipelago. Its name comes from the sea turtles that go there to lay their eggs. Other species can be found, including pelicans, flamingos and marine iguanas. Accommodation in the Hotel. **B/L/D**

Days 14: Charles Darwin Station – Baltra – Quito

In the morning you will visit the Charles Darwin Research Station. The station is also a tortoise breeding and rearing centre, where tortoises of different subspecies are prepared for reintroduction into their natural habitats. After the visit you take your flight back to Quito and transfer to your hostel. **B/-/-**

Day 15: Transfer to the airport and flight back home

After breakfast we will bring you to the airport and say good-bye hoping to welcome you another time here in the Middle of the World. **B/-/-**

Day 16: Arrive back home

Arrive back in UK today.

B= Breakfast; L= Lunch; D= Dinner