



Ecuador

Ecuador is a beautiful and fascinating country to visit. Small in size by South American standards, just half the size of France, Ecuador is so rich in culture, landscapes and wildlife. Ecuador is an ideal destination to enjoy a wealth of wonderful experiences in a relatively short amount of time.

At a glance

- 3 distinct areas: Pacific coastal area, Andes mountain range including volcanoes and cloud forest, and Amazonian jungle
- Wonderful biodiversity. Especially good for bird watching
- Beautiful handicrafts and colourful markets
- Good standard accommodation including historic haciendas
- Equator runs across the north of the country
- Ecuador can be visited all year round. Climates vary from area to area.
- Compact country ideally suited for a fly-drive holiday in the Andes
- Quito and Guayaquil are stepping off points for the Galápagos Islands

→ Getting there

Flights to Quito from Heathrow via Europe (Amsterdam, Bonaire or Madrid) with KLM, or Iberia, or via Miami with British Airways/American Airlines. Flights from Heathrow via Houston with Continental. Regional departures available on request.

Prices from **£2,964** per person for a 14 night itinerary.

See pages 104-106 for suggested itineraries and prices.

Combinations

Ecuador combines well with both The Galápagos Islands (see pages 108-119) and Peru (see pages 120-143).

See pages 22-29 for suggested country combination itineraries. See page 107 for our guidelines on holidays in Ecuador.





Quito

Quito is the capital city of Ecuador and located in the North of the Country, just 45km South of the Equator.

Situated at an altitude of 2850m this is the second highest city in Latin America (La Paz, Bolivia being the highest; please see page 140).

Quito occupies a long, narrow stretch of land overlooked by Pichincha volcano (4794m) to the West with views of the green sweeping 'Valle de los Chillos' to the East. A picturesque location, which enjoys a 'Spring-like' climate most of the year.

The beautiful colonial, 'old city' was the first city in the World to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1978. Stroll through the steep, narrow streets and cobbled

plazas to find ornate churches, monasteries, mansions and pastel coloured balconied houses.

Since independence, Quito has gradually expanded to the North and South; the 'new city' to the North of the 'old city' has a different feel with broad avenues lined with private residences, embassies, parks, banks, shops, bars and restaurants.

Quito's location enables visitors to take an interesting trip to 'Mitad del Mundo' (Middle of the World) where a monument marks the Equatorial Line and an exhibition centre and local museum are home to some fascinating facts.



Hotel Patio Andaluz

Quito **BB**

Surrounded by churches, museums and national monuments the Patio Andaluz is located in the heart of the historical colonial quarter of Quito. This charming historic hotel has 32 stylishly decorated en suite rooms including 11 suites on two levels, around 2 covered courtyards, which the windows from the rooms look over.

The Cantatuna restaurant is open daily and serves Spanish and Ecuadorian cuisine. Guests can enjoy refreshments in the interior covered courtyard and library or bar. The hotel is ideally located for those who wish to explore the capital's historical centre.



Casa Aliso

Quito **BB**

Originally built in 1936, the Casa Aliso is a lovely boutique hotel located approximately a 5 minute drive from the historical centre of Quito. Resembling a stylish private residence, the Casa Aliso is known as one of the best boutique hotels in Ecuador. There are 10 rooms individually designed and decorated including private facilities with bath and shower, cable TV, telephone and safe deposit box.

There are 3 front garden view rooms with high ceilings and wooden floors; 3 back garden view rooms with a balcony overlooking the garden and on the upper level, 4 more recently built rooms constructed around a beautiful marble and iron suitcase with antique chandelier. Breakfast can be taken in the garden and a 'petit menu' available. A charming boutique property, a warm welcome and outstanding hospitality make this hotel one of our favourites.



Plaza Grande

Quito **BB**

Plaza Grande has a prime location, situated opposite the Presidential Palace on the Central Plaza in the historical heart of the city. This legendary 16th Century building was once home to Juan Diaz de Hidalgo, one of the Spanish conquerors and founders of the city.

There are 3 restaurants, including the Belle Epoque locally known as the best in the city, 24 hour room service, an intimate Spa and horse and carriage service are also available to guests. There are 15 luxurious suites, all elegantly furnished and offer private facilities with Jacuzzi, air conditioning, TV and mini bar. The Plaza View suites offer wonderful views from their balconies and the Presidential Suite also features a living room, dining room, kitchen and bedroom with two balconies overlooking the Central Plaza.



Haciendas & Markets

Two hours North of Quito nestled in the Highlands is Otavalo (2535m), home to one of the largest and most colourful markets held on a Saturday (smaller market held on other days).

For hundreds of years, indigenous people from at least seventy surrounding villages have brought their crafts and produce for sale. Much of the business is local and a cultural insight for the visitor to see exchanges taking place, especially as many 'Otavalenos' still wear traditional garments.

There are also substantial sections of the market dedicated to tourists with a range of wood carvings, clothing, crafts, ceramics, musical instruments and souvenirs. It is most renowned for weavings, tapestries and garments.

Regarding accommodation in the Highlands, there are several beautiful haciendas, often converted grand farming estates from colonial times with interesting histories.

Many still retain their character and authenticity with antique furnishings and carefully restored period pieces, such as open fires in each room, including guest rooms. Some haciendas are still working farms, growing their own produce and keeping stables and horses.



Hacienda Cusin

San Pablo Del Lago, Imbabura [BB](#)

Founded in 1602, Cusin's new owner sympathetically converted it into a country lodge comprising of standard rooms, suites and garden cottages in 1990. A short walk away from the main building, the separate Monastery building has white buttressed walls, towers, parapets and courtyards.

All 40 guestrooms have private bathrooms with showers and garden or mountain views. 33 of the rooms have fireplaces, beamed ceilings and Andean craft furnishings. The Main House contains the antique furnished Salon Bolivar, a cosy bar, and the dining room with a log fire and walls hung with tapestries where dinner is served under chandeliers by candlelight. Horse-riding is also available in the hotel grounds.



Hacienda Pinsaqui

Otavalo, Imbabura [BB](#)

At the heart of Ecuador's lake district, the Hacienda Pinsaqui is ideally located at the base of the Imbabura Volcano and within easy reach of the colonial city of Ibarra, Cotacachi village known for handicrafts. Built in 1790, the hacienda was originally a colonial textile enterprise, employing over 1000 weavers and spinners. So successful was the business that many of the fabrics produced here were exported to USA in the late 19th Century.

Hacienda Pinsaqui offers 30 suites with fireplaces, some with Jacuzzi bath. Each room is unique and most overlook the 200 year old grounds with ponds, palm trees and well kept gardens. There is a white stone walled restaurant which displays historic art and offers wonderful views of the grounds. The restaurant serves some of the finest Ecuadorian and International cuisine. Horse riding, mountain biking and hiking are a few of the activities guests can enjoy here.



Hacienda Zuleta

Angochagua, Imbabura [FB](#)

Built in the late 16th Century, Hacienda Zuleta is a colonial working farm which has belonged to the family of a former President of Ecuador for over 100 years. Located within 2000 hectares at 2800m above sea level in the spectacular Andes mountain range, the grounds consist of pastureland, forest and protected areas of native primary forest.

There are 15 beautifully decorated guest rooms, each with their own fireplace. The hacienda houses a working cheese farm, trout farm and organic garden where produce is sold at a local market.

Activities including horse riding, mountain biking and a horse drawn carriage to take a trip around the estate to see the milking and daily operation of the farm. Guests may also visit the Condor Huasi Project which rehabilitates the Andean Condor.



The Cloud Forest

The cloud forest and subtropical rainforest of Ecuador are micro-climates of great biological importance. Mindo Cloud Forest is one of the most accessible of these forests; situated approximately two hours west of Quito.

The reserve consists of primary forest with immense biodiversity, and boasts one of the greatest concentrations of bird species anywhere in the world. In addition to the vast array of birds, many of which are endemic to the Chocó bioregion, the area is home to over 375 types of orchids and a wide variety of bromeliads and butterflies. The small town of Mindo is situated in a tranquil valley on the edge of the cloud forest. Nearby are the Caligo Butterfly

Farm, an orchid garden and several waterfalls. North west of Mindo, two hours from Quito and at a lower altitude in the Ecuadorian Tropical Forest, is Arasha Resort.

At 541m, Arasha Resort is in a transition area of forest between the cloud forest and the lower rainforest. The daytime temperatures range between 20 and 30°C with moderate humidity, making it a good all year round resort.



Bellavista Lodge

Bellavista Cloud Forest Resort [FB](#)

Within driving distance of Mindo is the Bellavista Lodge, situated within the Bellavista Reserve which covers 700 hectares of primary and secondary forest. The reserve is located at varying heights of 1650-2350m above sea level and home to a recorded 330 species of birds including 15 species of hummingbird. There are 10km trails, hidden waterfalls to discover, vast forest and mountain views to enjoy. Horse riding and mountain bike hire is also available in the area.

The accommodation is set in 5 different lodges and we are featuring the Trailhead House which offers spacious balconies with hammocks where guests can watch the hummingbirds come and go. The accommodation is simple but comfortable, offer private facilities and a short walk to the main building to take breakfast, lunch and dinner (included). Food is local and international and dietary requirements can be catered for if notice is given in advance.



Mashpi Lodge

Tumbez-Choco-Darien [FB](#)

New for 2011, Mashpi Lodge is located just 2 hours 30 minutes North West of Quito. Located in a protected area within the Andean rainforest, Mashpi Lodge and reserve is situated in a biodiversity 'hot spot' of the Tumbez-Choco-Darien region which stretches from Panama to Northern Peru.

Emphasis is placed on protecting the environment and travel to the lodge from the edge of the reserve is by electric buggy to minimise the impact. In addition, there is an environmentally-friendly aerial tram for guests to reach different parts of the reserve and to appreciate the rainforest from the upper canopy.

There are 18 large guest rooms, tastefully furnished with king size or two queen size beds, private facilities and picture windows. Facilities include a Spa where guests can relax and enjoy specialised treatments, some using the local ingredients from the forest.



Wildsumaco Lodge

Andean Slopes [FB](#)

Wildsumaco Lodge is set on a ridge in the Eastern Andean Foothills, with panoramic views reaching across the Rio Pucuno Valley and on clear days, the snow covered peaks of El Altar, Tungurahua and Antisana Volcanoes can be seen through the mists.

Most visitors here are birders or photographers and they visit to view some of the 450 recorded bird species at the reserve and surrounding areas. The location provides a habitat for a wonderful mix of Cloudforest, Foothill and Amazonian bird species; many rare, endangered or very difficult to see elsewhere.

Non-birder companions can enjoy hiking the trails or relaxing and enjoying the magnificent views from the lodge area.

Rooms here are very comfortable with private facilities.



The Amazon Basin

The Amazon Basin is the largest tract of tropical rainforest on the planet. East of the Andes, the mountains fall away to these tropical lowlands. The Ecuadorian Amazon is a relatively accessible region where conservation and environmental and cultural awareness are well developed.

This beautiful wilderness remains relatively unspoilt, populated with indigenous settlements along the tributaries of the Amazon. These small Quechua communities live in thatched roof houses built on stilts, surrounded by small gardens, some are visible as you navigate the River Napo.

As with most of the western Amazon basin, it has a heavy rainfall coming in from the east and is largely covered with

tropical rainforest. The climate is hot and humid all year round. A 25 minute flight from Quito brings you to the river port town of Coca where you are met by a guide and taken across town to the River Napo to a covered, motorised canoe. A boxed lunch will be provided during the journey.

From here, the journey differs depending on the final choice of lodge, although a transfer is more of a tour and a great introduction to the Amazon Basin!

Useful Notes

Flora and fauna

This part of the Ecuadorian Amazon is home to over 600 species of birds including vibrantly colourful parrots, parakeets, toucans and scarlet macaws. Butterflies, insects, frogs, caiman and sloths abound. Mammals of the region include racoons, agoutis, deer, tapirs, ocelots and bats. Species of monkey in the area include

the howler, spider, squirrel, white faced capuchin and golden mantle tamarin. Luxuriant lianas, bromeliads and palm trees are all in evidence.

WEB EXTRA

For further choice of lodges and Amazon cruise, please see our website.

www.sunvil.co.uk



Napo Wildlife Centre

River Napo **1B**

Napo Wildlife Centre is located by the Anangu Lake on the south side of the River Napo. It is set within its own 82 square mile reserve area within the Yasuni National Park and was created and built by the Anangu community. Local people are being trained to assist in, and eventually take over, the running of the lodge. The thatched roof, adobe-style buildings of the lodge include a dining hall with a library and a bar with a fifty foot viewing tower attached. Accommodation is in 10 spacious cabins all with a kingsize and a single bed, private bathroom with shower and hot water, ceiling fans and private porches with lake views and hammocks.

All activities take place in small groups led by knowledgeable local guides who also work as Yasuni park rangers, and a bilingual naturalist. Typical activities during a stay here include guided hikes on trails, dugout canoe rides, clay lick visits and a 36 metre canopy tower.



Sacha Lodge

River Napo **1B**

Sacha Jungle Lodge is situated beside the tranquil oxbow Lake Pilchicocha, part of the Napo River. It is surrounded by thirteen square kilometers of its own primary rainforest. The wooden, thatched roof buildings blend in to the surrounding forest and offer an experience which is always close to nature. The 26 cabins are all simply furnished, have private bathroom with shower and hot water, ceiling fan, and spacious porches with hammocks from where you can relax and listen to the rich and varied sounds of the jungle. Guests can also enjoy a raised lookout above the bar and lounge which offers a scenic view of Pilchicocha Lake.

Guests are divided into small groups led by a native guide and a bilingual naturalist guide. Activities during the stay may include guided walks, dugout canoe rides, visits to a clay lick, a Quechua village, the 43 metre high observation tower and the butterfly farm. There is also a 300 metre long walkway which threads through the jungle canopy.



Huaorani Ecolodge

Quehueri'ono **1B**

Depart from Quito or Banos for a 45 minute flight to the Amazon Rainforest. The small aircraft lands on a grass strip surrounded by jungle where guests are welcomed by the Huaorani (pronounced Waorani) tribe. From here, there is a one hour transfer by dug out canoe. The lodge consists of 5 palm thatched cabins situated in the rainforest and close to the river; each cabin is comfortable, simply furnished and has private shower and toilet (eco soaps/shampoo are provided to conserve the local area).

There is a palm thatched dining area and shop for essentials, and a hammock house by the riverside. We offer a 3 night itinerary which includes full board, local flights, transfers (from Quito or Banos) and all activities to observe the wildlife, learn the secrets of survival in the rainforest, and enjoy an insight into how the community live – a very special and unique experience. (Longer durations of up to 8 nights also available)



The Avenue of Volcanoes: Cotopaxi to Cuenca

The Avenue of Volcanoes is as it sounds! Follow part of the 'avenue' by taking the road South of the Ecuadorian capital, Quito, through to the colonial city of Cuenca. This journey takes in some spectacular scenery, weaving through lush, fertile valleys, protected wildlife areas and offering incredible views of the majestic volcanoes which dominate the skyline with their grandeur.

Upon leaving the beautiful city of Quito behind, the road climbs through an immense patchwork of fields and across the pine forests of an enormous plateau to reach the province of Cotopaxi.

Cotopaxi National Park is the most famous national park in Ecuador, covering an enormous 33,393 hectares and home to wolves, bears and pumas. Cotopaxi Volcano is one of the highest active volcanoes in the World and measures 5,897m. There is a good gravel road which winds up the

ash-strewn side to a parking area located at 4,600m; from here, the physically fit can slowly walk a further distance of 200m to a refuge with incredible views – altitude and weather permitting!

En route from Cotopaxi to Riobamba is **Banos**, a spa town where thermal baths provide a welcome for many walkers and visitors alike! Banos is located in the Tungurahua province, nestled in a valley at the foot of Tungurahua Volcano (5,023m).

Riobamba holds quite a unique location where on a clear day, it is possible to see the peaks of five volcanoes! Chimborazo (6,310m), Altar (5,319m), Tungurahua (5,023m), Carihuairazo (5,020m) and Sangay (5,230m) – a magnificent view!

Chimborazo, the highest volcano in Ecuador (and once thought to be the highest mountain on earth) is located approx. 50km from Riobamba.



Hosteria La Cienega

Llasso - Cotopaxi **BB**

Probably one of the most famous hosteria in Ecuador, if not in South America. Built in 1695 by the Marquis of Maenza, the hacienda still belongs to his descendants to this day. Famous names have resided here most notably five times president Jose Maria Belasco Ibarra. There are 32 large, comfortable rooms (some in a more modern extension) and two large suites, most furnished with original period furniture. All rooms are en suite (most with a shower).

Originally built in the form of a square, with a formal colourful garden in the centre, the hacienda has its own chapel and many cosy sitting areas. There is also an informal restaurant serving mainly local dishes. This is an ideal base from which to visit Cotopaxi National Park (30 minutes drive), and the fascinating nearby towns of Latacunga, Sasquili and Pujili on market day.



Hacienda Leito, Patate

Llanganates National Park **HB**

Located in the Llanganates National Park and within view of the Tungurahua volcano sits the Hacienda Leito surrounded by 2 hectares of garden boasting over 200 species of plants and flowers. Facilities include an indoor swimming pool kept at a constant 27°C and a spa offering a variety of treatments and special packages. For the more active, there is a small gym and a choice of treks are available.

Treks recommended from 2 hours to a full day, including horse riding and cycling; there's no better way to explore the area and finish the day with a relaxing massage at the Spa. Visit here February to April to see the orchids in flower. Accommodation comprises of 24 rooms and 5 suites with fine furnishings, wooden floors, beamed ceilings and private balconies with views of the gardens, National Park or Tungurahua volcano (some rooms have their own stone fireplace).



Luna Runtun

Banos, Sangay National Park **HB**

The Luna Runtun has a unique location situated above the town of Banos and surrounded by spectacular views of the valley, hotel gardens, the Andes and Tungurahua volcano. The hotel grounds cover some 63 acres of beautifully maintained gardens within the Sangay National Park. The spa offers an extensive list of treatments utilising fresh and natural medicinal plants grown in the hotel gardens and volcanic stones from the Tungurahua volcano. For those with a sense of adventure, hiking, canoeing, rafting, mountain biking and horse riding can be enjoyed – a great way of exploring the area! There are 30 rooms and suites, each individually decorated and offering magnificent views. All rooms have private facilities, safety deposit box, hairdryer; superior rooms differ by the view and some offer a fireplace, small living room and garden; deluxe rooms are elegantly furnished and offer wonderful views with a private balcony. All suites have the addition of a living room and 360 degrees views!



From Riobamba, heading towards Cuenca, there is the most famous Inca and pre-Inca site in Ecuador; Ingapirca. The drive is approx. 5 hours from Riobamba and just 1 hour 30 minutes from Cuenca.

Cuenca remains a beautiful colonial city and the centre of art and culture. The city is excellent for shopping, particularly for silver and gold goods, and home to the Homero Ortega's Panama hat factory; the main centre for Panama hat production and a recommended visit!

Cuenca was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999 and the Spanish style architecture in the old town district adds to the beauty of this well preserved city!



Hosteria Abraspungo

Riobamba **HB**

The Hosteria Abraspungo is set within large, well-tended grounds and takes its name from the glacial valley that is situated between the mountains of Chimborazo and Carihuairazo. It's architectural style is 'mestizo', typical of the Ecuadorian countryside; a theme which is evident throughout the hosteria with the display of numerous photographs of the surrounding regions.

The stone floored dining room and bar display many interesting artefacts as well as ancient farming equipment. There is a cosy lounge which features a large open fireplace. The property offers 32 rooms including a number of suites, all with private facilities (bath or shower), television, telephone and hair-dryer.



Hotel Santa Lucia

Cuenca **BB**

Situated in the Old Town district of Cuenca, Santa Lucia is one of the city's most historic antique buildings. As a house, it belonged to one of the region's most important families for over a hundred years. It was carefully restored in 2001 and is a good example of the architectural style of the last part of the nineteenth century.

The 19 individually decorated rooms, including two suites, are all en suite with cable TV, mini-bar, hairdryer and safety box. Guests can enjoy Italian cuisine in the Trattoria Novocento or refreshments in the Bacus café. The beautifully decorated French salon and attractive plant filled courtyard, provide areas for relaxation. Hotel Santa Lucia offers modern comforts in a historical setting, well located for exploring the city.



Mansion Alcazar

Cuenca **BB**

This turn of the century Mansion was completely restored during 2001 to its former colonial style glory. The elegant lobby, tranquil lounge and reading room are elaborately decorated with period furniture.

The intimate restaurant serves a mixture of local and international cuisine. The 14 bedrooms are all individually and traditionally furnished. Mansion Alcazar is an excellent choice for those looking for a sophisticated character hotel in the heart of Cuenca.



Loja Province

Loja, the capital city of the Province, was founded in 1548 and is one of the oldest cities in Ecuador. Originally the city was founded in the Valley of Catamayo, however, after suffering a series of earthquakes, the city was rebuilt on the other side of the Andes.

Located at 2100m above sea level, it is a traditional colonial city with rich, colonial architecture, narrow streets, tidy parks and 16th Century homes. It is also known for a modern approach to development and environmental care. A pioneering city which also prides itself in having two major universities for a population of just 95,000.

Just 42km from Loja lies Vilcabamba, a quilted patchwork of corn and sugar cane fields, fruit orchards and cattle pastures. Vilcabamba is a beautiful, sub-tropical valley also known as the 'Valley of Longevity' due to the long life span enjoyed by the local people who reportedly live to well over

100 years. It is said that the 'Spring like' year round climate, pure mountain air and water, natural organic foods and medicinal herbs and peaceful atmosphere attributes to the local people living to a great age.

From Loja or Vilcabamba, a visit to Podocarpus National Park can be arranged; travel up mountains, across rivers to waterfalls and explore this lesser known National Park by hiking, horse riding or mountain biking (tours for all levels of experience are available). The Park boasts large expanses of virgin forest and is home to giant 40m Podocarpus trees, countless orchids and particularly rich in over 600 species of bird life.



Grand Victoria Boutique Hotel

Loja **BB**

The Grand Victoria Boutique Hotel is a beautifully restored colonial home. Located just steps away from the Central Plaza in the historical centre, this elegant hotel is decorated with fine furnishings, rich fabrics and marble floors. The hotel offers 2 restaurants, a cafe and bar, swimming pool and spa, business centre and concierge.

There are 34 rooms and 4 suites with private facilities, bathrobes, flat screen cable TV, mini bar and safety deposit box. The suites are each individually furnished with living area and Jacuzzi bath.

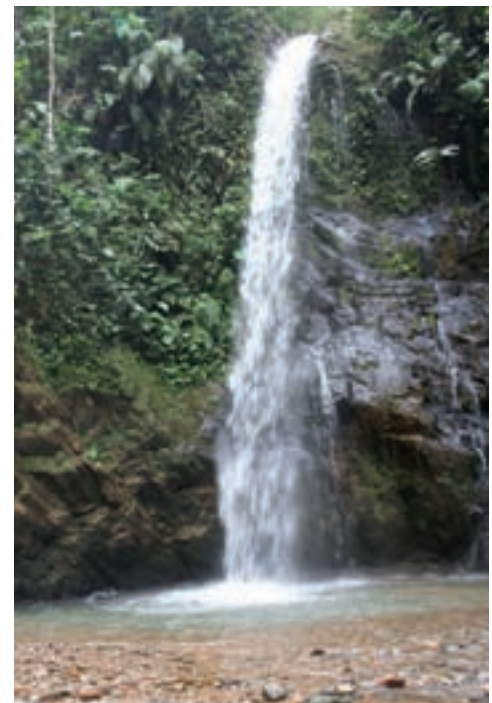


Madre Tierra Hotel & Spa

Vilcabamba **BB**

Madre Tierra, meaning 'Mother Earth' is located on a mountainside, surrounded by tropical gardens and overlooking the Andes and mountain, 'El Mandango'. Rooms here are charming and comfortable, each with a unique character and scattered on the mountainside, nestled amongst the gardens and hammocks.

The Madre Tierra Spa is well known and open to non-residents, for residents, the spa treatments are half price.





Guayaquil

Sited on the left bank of the Rio Guayas, Guayaquil is Ecuador's largest city and main sea port. A large and vibrant industrial, commercial and political centre, parts of its downtown have recently undergone a successful facelift.

These include the Malécon 2000, an attractive promenade along the river near the main shopping area. This links up with the old quarter of Las Peñas on Cerro Santa Ana, a small steep hill overlooking the river where the old wooden houses are being sympathetically restored and brightly painted.

There are also several churches worth visiting, including the gothic style Cathedral, and some interesting archaeological exhibitions.



Hampton Inn

Guayaquil **HB**

Hampton Inn is very centrally located in downtown Guayaquil and within easy walking distance to shops, restaurants and Malecon 2000 promenade making it an ideal base to explore the city.

Hotel facilities include a fitness room and small lap pool, a business centre, beauty salon, gift shop, laundry service, concierge, valet service, bar/lounge, 'Café Boulevard' serving breakfast, lunch and dinner and room service. There are 95 spacious rooms and suites, with private facilities, two double beds, 25" TV, internet access and coffee maker.

The Pacific Coast

The coastal area of the Pacific Lowlands offers natural beauty, diverse flora and fauna and a rich cultural heritage. A short flight from Quito brings you to Manta, the country's second most important port.

Two hours drive south of Manta, along a picturesque coastal road, is Puerto López, a small fishing town set in its own bay. The area also has some small, quiet sandy beaches which are well off the beaten track.

En route is Machalilla National Park, Ecuador's only coastal national park. At 137,500 acres, the park protects the unique coastal land and marine habitat as well as small archaeological sites. In the cloudforest area of San Sebastian the landscape changes to one of lush vegetation including heliconias and orchids and is home to howler monkeys and over 350 species of birds. The park also encompasses a number of beautiful

beaches, most notably Playa Los Frailes, with its white sand and dramatic cliff backdrop.

37 kilometers off the coast of Puerto López lies Isla de la Plata (Silver Island) which derives its name from the local legend that Sir Francis Drake buried treasure here. A large number of marine birds populate the island including frigates, waved albatrosses and blue-footed, red-footed and masked boobies. The waters around the island are one of the prime sites along the coast for viewing humpback whales from June to September. Day trips to the island include a guided hike to appreciate the flora, fauna and birdlife, and time is allowed for swimming and snorkelling.



Mantaraya Lodge

Puerto Lopez **HB**

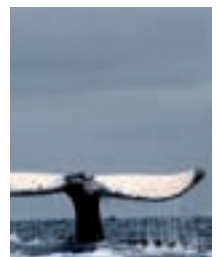
Located within Machalilla National Park and just a 10 minute drive from Puerto López, Mantaraya Lodge is set amidst a vast expanse of forest and offers spectacular views over the Pacific coastline.

All 15 spacious rooms are simply but attractively furnished with tiled floors and ceiling fans. Cocktails can be enjoyed around the swimming pool whilst appreciating the magnificent sunsets. There is also a small restaurant serving a particularly good range of fish dishes and a cosy nautically themed bar. An appealing property in a tranquil setting.

Useful Notes

Humpback Whales

These impressive mammals get their name both from their humped dorsal fins and the way they arch when diving. Not only are they acrobatic, but also extremely vocal, emitting loud 'singing' noises. Between the months of June and September, the Humpback whales make their way from the icy waters of Antarctica to the warmer Pacific waters off the coast of Ecuador to search for a partner and have offspring.



Altitude

For those clients sensitive to altitude and prefer to stay at sea level, Guayaquil makes for a good 'gateway' to Ecuador and a stop before/after a visit to Galapagos Islands.





Suggested Itineraries

Please find to follow some suggested itineraries to make the most of the beauty and variety of Ecuador. These itineraries are merely suggestions and can be altered to suit individual choices. Each of these can be combined with a visit to the Amazon and/or the Galapagos Islands.

Throughout, accommodation is based on a bed & breakfast basis, unless stated otherwise, and transfers/excursions privately guided, unless stated otherwise. Ecuador is also ideal for self drive, please see itineraries on the opposite page.

Essential Ecuador

6 NIGHTS

Ideal for those with limited time who wish to combine Ecuador with another destination such as the Galápagos Islands or Peru.

- Quito 2 nights BB
- Mindo 1 night HB
- Imbabura 2 nights BB
- Cotopaxi 1 night BB

Day 1 Private transfer to Hotel Patio Andaluz in the colonial old part of Quito, twenty-five minutes from the airport. Check-in for overnight stay on bed and breakfast basis.

Day 2 Private guided half day city tour of Quito. Drive to Mitad del Mundo to visit Inti-Nan Museum, where you have the opportunity to partake in experiments relating to the equator. Lunch included. Drive to Mindo Cloud Forest and check-in to Septimo Paraiso for overnight stay on half board basis.

Day 3 Opportunity of early morning bird watching to see the 'cock of the rock's' noisy early morning ritual. After breakfast guided walk on the trails in Septimo Paraiso Reserve looking at flora and fauna of the

area, especially the diverse birdlife that the area is famous for. Lunch included. Drive to the volcano and lake area of Imbabura. Check-in for a two night stay at Hacienda Cusin on bed and breakfast basis.

Day 4 Full day private guided tour of the area including the colourful Otavalo market, a walk by Cuicocha Lake (in a volcano crater) and a visit to the village of Cotacachi. Overnight at Hacienda Cusin

Day 5 Private transfer south towards the snow capped volcano Cotopaxi visiting Papallacta Thermal Springs or Artisana National Reserve en route. Lunch included. Opportunity to visit rose farm if open. Check-in for overnight stay at Hosteria La Cienega on bed and breakfast basis.

Day 6 Visit local traditional market (Thursday, Saturday and Sunday only) followed by drive to Cotopaxi National Park. Opportunity to walk to a refuge below the start of the glacier, or beside a local lake. Drive to Quito late afternoon. Check-in to Patio Andaluz for overnight stay on bed and breakfast basis.

Day 7 Private transfer to airport for international flight.

Avenue of the Volcanoes

11 NIGHTS

This itinerary covers the fascinating Andean Highland regions following the legendary Avenue of Volcanoes

- Quito 1 night BB
- Mindo 1 night FB
- Imbabura 3 nights BB
- Cotopaxi 2 nights BB
- Banos 2 nights HB
- Cuenca 2 nights BB
- Guayaquil 1 night BB

Days 1 to 5 As for Essential Ecuador

Day 6 Visit local traditional market (Thursday, Saturday and Sunday only) followed by drive to Cotopaxi National Park. Opportunity to walk to a refuge below the start of the glacier, or beside a local lake. Overnight at Hosteria La Cienega.

Day 7 After breakfast, drive to Baños, visit the town and waterfalls nearby. Check-in to Luna Runtun for a 2 night stay on half board basis.

Day 8 After breakfast, day at leisure to take part in activities available to book locally or enjoy the hotel Spa.

Day 9 Transfer to the hotel in Cuenca, visiting Ingapirca, the most important Inca and pre-Inca site in Ecuador, en route (box lunch included). Upon arrival at hotel, check in for three night stay at Hotel Santa Lucia on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 10 Private guided walking tour of Cuenca, visiting the Cathedral, colonial buildings, cobbled streets, and colourful markets. Visit Homero Ortega Panama Hat factory. Afternoon at leisure. Overnight at Santa Lucia.

Day 11 Private guided excursion to El Cajas National Park, famous for its many beautiful lakes and birdlife. Drive on to Guayaquil. Overnight at Hampton Inn.

Day 12 Morning at leisure. Afternoon transfer to Guayaquil Airport for the International flight.

Amazon & Cloud Forest

10 NIGHTS

This itinerary can be combined with the Galápagos Islands (see pages 108-119) for a complete wildlife experience.

- Quito 3 nights (total) BB
- Mindo 3 nights HB
- Amazon Basin 4 nights FB

Day 1 Private transfer to hotel. Check in to Patio Andaluz for 1 night on bed and breakfast basis.

Day 2 Private guided city tour. Private transfer to Mindo visiting the equator and Pauma Reserve (orchids) en route. Check in to Septimo Paraiso for 3 nights on half board basis.

Day 3 / 4 Guided walk through trails at Septimo Paraiso. Visit to local butterfly farm and Bellavista Reserve. Includes opportunity to see 'cock of the rock' noisy, early morning ritual.

Day 5 Return to Quito visiting Yanacocha Nature Reserve en route. Check into Hotel Patio Andaluz for 1 night on bed and breakfast basis

Day 6 Private transfer to airport. Flight to Coca. Group transfer to jungle lodge (motorised canoe, dug out canoe). Check into Napo Wildlife Centre for 4 nights on a full board basis.

Day 7 / 8 / 9 Guided jungle activities

Day 10 Group transfer to Coca airport. Flight to Quito. Private transfer to hotel. Check into Hotel Patio Andaluz for 1 night on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 11 Private transfer to airport for international flight or flight to The Galápagos.





Birdwatching East & West Andean Slopes – Fly Drive

14 NIGHTS

- Quito 3 nights BB
- Cloud Forest 3 nights FB
- Andean Slopes 3 nights FB

Day 1 Private transfer from Quito Airport to hotel. Overnight at Casa Aliso for 1 night on a bed & breakfast basis
Day 2 After breakfast, depart Quito for a full day birding at the Yanacocha Reserve. Transfer to and overnight at Bellavista Lodge, Cloud Forest. Full Board included.
Day 3 After breakfast, full day birding at Bellavista Reserve. Transfer to and overnight at Sachatamia Ecological

Reserve. Full Board included.
Day 4 Early departure to view the ‘cock of the rock’ on the ‘Paz de las Aves’ Refuge. Visit butterfly and orchid farms. Overnight at Sachatamia Ecological Reserve. Full Board Included.
Day 5 After breakfast, birding full day in Milpe Sanctuary. Transfer to return to hotel in Quito. Overnight at Casa Aliso on a bed & breakfast basis.
Day 6 Early departure for birding at Papallacta area. Late arrival to Wildsumaco. Overnight at Wildsumaco. Full Board included.

Day 7 After breakfast, full day at Wildsumaco. Overnight and Full Board included.
Day 8 After breakfast, full day birding at Wildsumaco. Late transfer to San Isidro Lodge. Full Board included.
Day 9 Full day birding around the area of San Isidro Lodge. Late transfer to return to the hotel in Quito. Overnight at Casa Aliso on a bed & breakfast basis.
Day 10 After breakfast, transfer to Quito Airport for the return flight to UK.



Ecuadorian Adventure – Fly Drive

14 NIGHTS

This fly-drive itinerary covers the cloud forest, the Andean Highland and the Amazon Basin

- Quito 4 nights (total) BB
- Mindo 2 nights HB
- Cotopaxi 2 nights BB
- Riobamba 1 night HB
- Cuenca 2 nights BB
- Amazon Basin 3 nights FB

Day 1 A private transfer to Hotel Patio Andaluz. Check-in for two night stay on bed and breakfast basis.
Day 2 Private guided half day city tour of Quito including drive to Mitad del Mundo to visit the Inti-Nan Museum, where you have the opportunity to partake in experiments

relating to the equator. Lunch included. Remainder of day at leisure. Overnight at Hotel Patio Andaluz.
Day 3 After breakfast, 4x4 vehicle delivered to hotel. Drive to Mindo Cloud Forest. Check-in for two night stay at Septimo Paraiso on half board basis.
Day 4 Day at leisure to explore the cloud forest and nearby butterfly farm and or chid garden. Overnight at Septimo Paraiso, Mindo.
Day 5 Drive to Cotopaxi region. Check in for two night stay at Hosteria La Cienega, Lasso, on bed and breakfast basis.
Day 6 Day at leisure to explore Cotopaxi National Park. Overnight at Hosteria La Cienega.

Day 7 Drive south to Riobamba. A visit to Baños en route is recommended. Check-in for overnight stay at Hosteria Abraspungo, Riobamba, on half board basis.
Day 8 A visit to the Inca ruins at Ingapirca en route is recommended. Check-in for two night stay at Hotel Santa Lucia, Cuenca, on bed and breakfast basis.
Day 9 Day at leisure to visit El Cajas National Park. Overnight at Hotel Santa Lucia.
Day 10 After breakfast, 4x4 collected from hotel. Morning to explore Cuenca by foot. Afternoon transfer to Cuenca airport for flight to Quito. Private transfer to hotel. Overnight at Hotel Patio Andaluz, on bed and breakfast basis.

Day 11 Early morning transfer to Quito airport for flight to Coca. Group transfer to jungle lodge (motorised canoe, dugout canoe). Check in to Napo Wildlife Centre for 3 nights on a full board basis.
Day 12/13 Guided jungle activities.
Day 14 After breakfast, group transfer (dugout canoe, motorised canoe) to Coca airport for flight to Quito. Private transfer to hotel. Overnight at Hotel Patio Andaluz on bed and breakfast basis.
Day 15 Private transfer to Quito airport for return flight.



Approximate driving times

Quito - Otavalo	2 hours	Manta - Puerto Lopez	2 hours
Quito - Cotacachi	2.5 hours	Riobamba - Banos	1.5 hours
Quito - Mindo	2 hours	Banos - Cuenca	7 hours
Quito - Cotopaxi	2 hours	Cuenca - Guayaquil	4 hours
Otavalo - Cotopaxi (via Quito)	5 hours	Guayaquil - Puerto Lopez	4 hours
Cotopaxi - Riobamba	4 hours	Puerto Lopez - Manta	2 hours
Riobamba - Cuenca (inc. stop at Ingapirca)	7 hours	Cotopaxi - Banos	2 hours



Ecuador Flight details and prices



Flight Details

There is a choice of airlines to Ecuador:
Iberia Airlines (via Madrid)
KLM Airlines (via Amsterdam & Bonaire)
British Airways/American Airlines (via Miami)
Continental Airlines (via Houston)

Supplements for World Traveller Plus, Business and First Class are available – please ask for details.

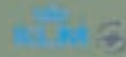
UK departure taxes are included in the prices shown. Departure tax from Ecuador is USD40 per person, payable at the departure airport prior to check in for the International flight. (please note, the tax is payable in US Dollar notes only and subject to change)



Daily	Daily
D Heathrow 06.20	D Quito 18.55
A Madrid 09.40	A Guayaquil 19.45
D Madrid 12.15	D Guayaquil 21.00
A Quito 17.20	A Madrid 13.45*
	D Madrid 16.30
	A Heathrow 17.50

*following day

Economy seat pitch
Madrid-Quito: 32ins



Daily except Tues	Daily except Wed
D Heathrow 18.35	D Quito 09.15
A Amsterdam 20.55	A Bonaire 12.50
D Amsterdam 23.55	D Bonaire 13.55
A Bonaire 03.20*	A Amsterdam 05.00*
D Bonaire 04.25	D Amsterdam 07.15
A Guayaquil 06.10	A Heathrow 07.40
D Guayaquil 07.10	
A Quito 08.00	

*following day

Economy seat pitch
Amsterdam-Quito: 31ins

D = Departure time
A = Arrival time

The above details were correct at the time of going to press. However, all timings and routings are subject to change and will be confirmed at the time of booking.

Prices for suggested itineraries

Holiday prices are in £'s per person for duration stated based on two persons sharing a twin/double room.

PLEASE NOTE AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS FINALISED AIRLINE AND GROUND PRICES WERE NOT AVAILABLE. THEREFORE, THE PRICES BELOW ARE A GUIDELINE ONLY. PLEASE CONTACT US FOR AN EXACT QUOTE. DURING EASTER AND CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR PERIODS SPECIAL SEASONAL RATES AND MINIMUM NUMBER OF NIGHTS MAY APPLY.

Departure date determines price.

See suggested itineraries for full details. See pages 104-105.

For itineraries combining Ecuador with other countries please see pages 22-29.

Departure Dates
01/01/11 - 20/06/11
08/08/11 - 30/11/11
28/12/11 - 31/12/11

Departure Dates
21/06/11 - 07/08/11
01/12/11 - 27/12/11

ITINERARY	Number of Nights	Guideline price	Guideline price
Essential Ecuador	6 nights	£2,128	£2,373
Amazon & Cloud Forest	10 nights	£3,037	£3,277
Avenue of Volcanoes	11 nights	£3,125	£3,366
Birdwatching: East & West Andean Slopes	9 nights	£3,028	£3,269
Ecuadorian Adventure - Fly Drive	14 nights	£2,964	£3,180

Price includes

- Economy scheduled flights from London Heathrow with Iberia Airlines (via Madrid) including UK airport departure tax and fuel surcharges
- Accommodation, internal flights, transfers, excursions, meals and car hire as outlined in the various itineraries

Not included

- Personal Travel Insurance (see page 246)
- International airport departure tax
- Airport taxes for internal flights
- Park entrance fees (where not specified on the itinerary)
- Tips

Notes

Single supplements are available on request

Important Note

Payment by credit or charge card will incur a 2% processing charge. This charge may rise if the credit card companies increase their charges.

Car Hire

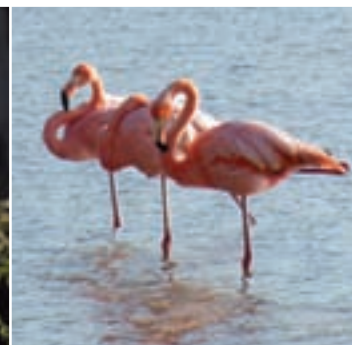
In order to be more independent and maximise your experience of the country, we recommend self drive for the Avenue of Volcanoes and the Pacific Coastal region.

The main roads in Ecuador are reasonably good but for comfort and accessibility to the National Parks and more remote areas, we recommend a Vitara 4x4 or similar.

The minimum age to hire a car in Ecuador is 25 and there is a maximum age of 65 years old. A UK driving license (or International driving license preferred), passport and credit card need to be presented when collecting the vehicle.

Included in car hire

- ✓ Unlimited mileage
- ✓ Collision Damage Waiver (cover for 'normal' use of the vehicle)
- ✓ Breakdown cover
- ✓ Local taxes
- ✓ Drop off charges (if applicable)
- ✓ Full tank of petrol (advised to return full to avoid any charges)
- ✓ Mobile phone provided by our representatives in Ecuador (pay for calls locally)



Ecuador & Galápagos - A Few Guidelines

Currency

The unit of currency is the US Dollar. The cost of living is low and local villages offer good leather items and tasteful indian textiles at very reasonable prices.

Visas

Travellers with British Passports do not need visas for Ecuador, but please ensure that your passport has at least six months to run. Please also take several photocopies of the main page of your passport with you. You will be given a tourist visa card to complete on your outbound flight. Upon arrival, this will be checked and stamped and you will be given a copy. Please ensure that you store this safely as you will be asked to submit it before your departure.

A machine-readable passport will be required. A machine readable passport can generally be identified by the presence of two typeface lines and numbers (with chevrons >>>) printed at the bottom of the page displaying your photo and personal details. If you are in any doubt as to whether or not your passport is a machine-readable passport, you should check with the UK Passport office.

Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA)

The USA government has enforced changes to its visa-waiver programme meaning travellers (including transit passengers) will be required to apply for authorisation to travel under the scheme before arriving at the airport. The changes, which came into effect in January 2009 will affect all passport holders from the 34 countries currently participating in the visa-waiver scheme, including UK passport holders. Further details will be supplied at the time of booking.

Biometric passports

There is a requirement by the US authorities that passports issued on or after October 26 2006 must be biometric.

Your current passport will remain valid until its expiry date. You will not need to exchange your passport to a biometric passport in the interim. The increasing threat of identity fraud necessitates the strengthening of security features in passports. The use of biometric information to link a person to a passport can help to counter identify fraud. The Biometric British passport (also known as e-passport) will have a new design with additional security features, including a chip with the holder's facial biometric details.

Food & Drink

Food varies with the region but is generally tasty, not particularly spicy and of a high standard in all the hotels and hosterias we use. There are typical dishes in every region and a very wide variety of delicious temperate and tropical fruits. A good meal with Argentinian or Chilean wine costs between \$15 and \$20 per person. Dinner is rarely served after 10.00pm.

Vaccinations / Health

You should always check with your doctor/practise nurse as to the latest requirements no later than four weeks before departure. At present in the Andean region there is no fear of malaria, but the standard typhoid, tetanus, polio, hepatitis A and cholera vaccinations are advisable. If you are to visit the Amazon jungle then you will probably need yellow fever and a course of anti-malaria tablets. These may also be necessary in some areas of the coastal lowlands.

We also recommend regular use of a sun block to protect your skin against the strong tropical sun at high altitudes. Drink bottled water to avoid heat exhaustion (checking seal is not broken). This should be drunk in preference to tap water. In the highlands, you will find that any strenuous activity will leave you breathless. You will need at least 48 hours to acclimatize but you should never expect to fully adjust to functioning normally at such altitudes.

Language

The Ecuadorians in much of the Andean and some of the Amazon regions speak Quechua, the ancient language of the Incas. Most people speak Spanish. It is better to ask permission (or gesture) with locals before taking photographs so as to avoid offending anyone.

Driving

Most roads are asphalted, are of a good standard and the driving (on the right) even in the cities of Quito and Cuenca is civilised. Traffic outside the cities is sparse. Dusk is around 6pm all year round.

Hotel Gradings

Hotels are graded de luxe, first class, second class and downwards. De luxe equates approximately to an average four star European city quality hotel and First Class to three star European standards. The Hosterias are also graded from First Class downwards. You will find the overall standard of the accommodation we feature to be very satisfactory

Weather / When to Go

Ecuador can be visited all year round. The weather in the highlands remains much the same throughout the year with small variations from region to region. As a general rule, the warmest and driest months in the highlands are from June to September and a short dry season also occurs during the month around Christmas. The mean temperature is about 13°C (55°F) and during the day can reach the low 20's°C (low 70's°F). At nights it is chilly, closer to 10°C (50°F) and you will need a jumper and light jacket. During the winter months of October to May it may rain in the afternoons.

In the Amazon basin you can expect it to be hot and very humid all year round. It rains during most of the year, especially during the afternoon and evening.

The Pacific coastal region is hot and sunny from December to May with heavy downpours. June to November is cooler and drier.

In the Galápagos, December to May is normally hot and rainy. It does not rain all the time, but you can expect torrential downpours now and then. Temperatures are between 24°C and 28°C (75°F and 82°F). Temperatures from June to November range between 18°C and 20°C (64°F to 68°F) - it rarely rains although it is often gray and overcast; also a stiff breeze can make the waters choppy.

Time

Ecuador is 5 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) (Galápagos is 6 hours behind).

Recommended Reading

Ecuador & Galápagos travel guides published by Lonely Planet, Footprint and Rough Guide all serve as a useful insight into the country.

Galápagos cruises

Food & Drink

Most dietary requirements can be catered for; please advise our office in advance.

Dress Code

On board all of the Galapagos cruises there is not a strict dress code, however, some restaurants on board require guests to wear smart/casual wear.

On Board Payments

Most cruise boats permit payment by US Dollar notes and/or credit cards.

The smaller boats may ask for your credit card details at the beginning of the cruise for authorisation, open a tab for the duration of your stay and debit your card on the last day of sailing.

Snorkelling Equipment

Please note all boats carry snorkelling equipment and wet suits though some charge a separate fee (payable locally) Please ask for up to date information.

Gratuities

Usually at the end of the cruise, two envelopes are tactfully left in each cabin; these are for you to give a tip to the naturalist guide and the rest of the crew if you wish to do so. Please note, gratuities are a personal decision and should not be expected.

We are often asked for advice with this issue, therefore to offer you a guideline, we would suggest in the region of \$150-175 per person in total for a 7 night cruise (to be shared between guide and crew). For those on shorter cruises a guideline of approximately \$25 per person per day.