



Andes to Amazon

It's got a nice ring to it, hasn't it? Andes to Amazon conjures up glistening mountain peaks, clear alpine lakes and verdant, teeming rainforest and we're pleased to say that's exactly what it delivers! In just under two weeks you can visit these two wildly different environments and get a real idea of what makes Ecuador such a special country.

We'll begin with some time in colonial Quito, with its elegant architecture and layers of history before checking out a traditional Andean market. Then we'll head into the stunning Cotopaxi National Park to see some of the amazing sights here before we head down into the rainforest for some real jungle adventures!



Day One - Arrival in Quito

As your holiday in Ecuador begins, we'll be there to pick you up and take you to your hotel, which is in the heart of Quito. You will probably be wanting some time to rest and get used to the altitude so we have left the rest of today free for you to relax. Your hotel is close to dozens of restaurants and cafes, as well as all the other facilities you'd expect from a capital city, so if you're feeling up to it then why not head on out and explore?



Day Two - City tour of Quito

After a free morning to relax and settle into things, we will pick you up after lunch and take you for a tour of Quito's Old Town, including the plazas, Cathedral and other sites of interest before heading out of town to the "Mitad del Mundo" (Middle of the World) centre, located right on the Equator, so you can stand astride the world!



Day Three - Otavalo market

An early start today, as we head out of Quito into the mountains to the north for a slice of the Real Ecuador! We'll be heading to the bustling local market at Otavalo - a typical mountain town that just happens to be home to the largest market in Ecuador! You can check out the beautiful local textiles, haggle over some excellent leather goods, or just sit back with an Ecuadorean coffee and take it all in! After a full day here, we will return to Quito in the evening.



Day Four - Cotopaxi National park

The snow-capped mountain of Cotopaxi is one of the enduring symbols of Ecuador, and no holiday in Ecuador is complete without a trip to see it. Today we will take you on a full-day tour through the Cotopaxi National Park, giving you the chance for some breathtaking photos along the way.



Day Five - Lake Quilotoa

Today we will head away from Cotopaxi to the volcanic Quilotoa lake. We guarantee you've never seen anything like it - climbing up to the lip of the (extinct!) volcano, you look down into a bluey-green lake that seems utterly surreal. You can then head down to the lake and take out a rowing-boat or canoe, before coming back up by horse to your waiting driver. In the evening, we'll head further south through Ecuador, to the town of Riobamba, where we will spend the night in a traditional Hosteria.



Day Seven - Into the jungle!

After breakfast this morning, we will pick you up and take you back to the airport for a flight across the Andes and down into the Amazon basin. We will land in the jungle town of Coca, from where we will head to the river to continue our journey deep into the Amazon basin by motorized covered canoe. On our journey down the Napo river, we will have plentiful opportunities to see wildlife such as hawks, large- and yellow-billed terns, and hopefully even the famous “umbrella” bird. After a two-hour trip downriver, we will arrive at the entrance to the Yasuni Biosphere reserve, and transfer to smaller canoes for the journey up a small tributary of the Napo to the shores of Añangu Lake, where the Napo Wildlife Centre is situated. We will show to your cabin and leave you to relax ahead of dinner this evening.



Day Eight - Clay licks at Napo Wildlife Centre

Today we will visit two of the best clay licks in the Ecuadorean Amazon, in the company of our expert local guides. After breakfast we will travel downstream again to visit the first lick, located just away from the main Napo River. We will be able to watch and get some amazing photos as hundreds of brightly-coloured parrots arrive to eat the clay which provides much-needed minerals to supplement their diets. From our specially-designed concealed blind, we can watch all the different species of Parrots (particularly Mealy, Orange-winged and blue-headed parrots) squawk and fight it out for the best spots! When the activity at the first lick dies down, head over to the second lick, located deeper in the forest. Here, Cobalt-winged parakeets, Orange-cheeked parrots and Scarlet-shouldered parrotlets land at the entrance to a small cave to eat the clay and sip water from a pool. Birds begin arriving here in the late morning, and as the parrots enjoy their lunch we will be able to enjoy lunch here as well, from the security of another concealed viewing blind.



Day Nine - Napo Wildlife Centre

Today we will head out onto the pristine waters of Añangu Lake. Giant otters inhabit the lake and surrounding streams, and you may encounter a family fishing in the morning or resting in the afternoon. There is also a good chance of seeing some of the 4m-long Black Caimans that live in the lake and you will see many birds and monkeys in the trees around you. After our lake trip, we will explore some of the forest trails around the lodge area with your guide. This rich, lush primary rainforest is filled with exotic wildlife, including the golden-mantled tamarin, found only on the south side of the Napo. If you get really lucky, you might even spot a Jaguar or a Tapir!



Day Ten - Back to Quito

We will have an early start this morning and a chance to see the jungle sunrise as we head back down the Rio Napo to Coca to catch a flight back to Quito. On arrival we will meet you and take you back to your hotel to enjoy your return to civilization!



Day Eleven - Back to Quito

After breakfast this morning, we will pick you up and take you back to Quito, where you can get ready to head out for a final full day here in Ecuador. Postcards sent? Souvenirs bought? Then you're all set to enjoy a traditional meal before it's salsa time...



Day Twelve - Onward bound

Most flights back to the UK and to the Galapagos leave in the morning, so you'll just have time for breakfast today before it's time to say goodbye to Ecuador as we pick you up and take you to catch your flight either home, or on to your Galapagos cruise...

Easy upgrades

As we've said, we can tailormake your itinerary to your exact specifications, and you can have a look at our Ecuador Guide or some of our other Ecuador Holidays for ideas about how to add to this holiday, but we can also offer you some easy optional extras which fit into this exact itinerary:



Upgrade accommodation - from £50pp

This price is based on our standard 3-star hotels, which all have ensuite bathrooms, cable television, full buffet breakfasts, etc. However, if you'd like to upgrade your hotels to something with a little more luxury then please just ask and we'll make some recommendations!



Cuenca: the prettiest city in Ecuador - from £250pp

Why not take a couple of days and head to Cuenca to see the traditional 'panama' hat makers at work and soak up the colonial charm in one of Ecuador's most pleasant cities.



Relaxing on the Pacific Coast - from £400pp

If you want a bit more relaxation time then why not head to the warm Pacific Coast and soak up some sun? We have a range of excellent beach hotels so you can enjoy some comfort and relaxation after all that culture and wildlife...

Tailormade for you

Of course, what we want you to remember is that we're here to offer you any guidance and advice you need. We're not about trying to sell you more than you want - we want you to have the holiday that's right for you, so give us a call or send us an email and we can start to find out what sort of Ecuador holiday is right for you!