



The Full Monty

We can offer all kinds of holidays in Ecuador, big or small, but we know that some of you will want to see as much as you possibly can. This itinerary is designed to show you all the highlights that Ecuador has to offer - culture, history and the natural world - so that you can return home satisfied that you really have seen the Full Monty!

You'll arrive in Quito and have some time here to enjoy the lovely colonial architecture, before we head out into the Andes to visit the enormous Otavalo market - the best place in South America for traditional textiles and other items. Then we will take you into the Amazon jungle for a stay at the superb Napo Wildlife Centre, before coming back into the Andes to visit the Cotopaxi National Park on our way to the lovely town of Cuenca.

Having seen the jungle and the mountains, that just leaves Ecuador's beautiful coast, and so from Cuenca we will head down to the sea for you to enjoy a few days relaxation at an exclusive beachfront hotel to finish off this amazing Ecuador holiday...



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 - Free day in Quito

We've left today free for you to relax and enjoy the lovely city of Quito. There's loads to see and do here, from great museums to top shopping, and one of the best ways to get a birds-eye view of it all is to take the new 'Teleferiqo' cable-car up to the top of the Pichincha mountain! Of course, if you'd prefer something a little more active, then we could arrange something like a whitewater rafting trip or some downhill mountain biking...?



Day Five - 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 Six - 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 Seven - 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 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 Eight - 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 Nine - 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 Ten - 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 Eleven - The Devil's Nose

An early start again today, as we pick you up and take you to the train station in Riobamba, for a ride down the Devil's Nose! This infamous switchback took decades of work to complete but is now used mainly by tourists. You have some spectacular views as you travel down the line - especially for the adventurous ones who decide to ride on the roof... At the end of the line we will pick you up and take you on to the beautiful colonial city of Cuenca, where you will stay tonight.



Day Twelve - Tour of Cuenca

Today we will take you on a tour of this lovely city - probably the prettiest in Ecuador. We will visit the two cathedrals, two of Ecuador's best museums, and a factory where they make traditional 'Panama' hats. We will finish off by heading to a hill just outside Cuenca, from where you have some gorgeous views over the city and the countryside beyond.



Day Thirteen - Free day in Cuenca

We've left today free for you to wander around Cuenca. With its pleasant, tree-lined streets and squares, gorgeous domed churches, and some of the best food and drink in the country, we're sure you'll find lovely plenty of places to sit and write those postcards - we can even recommend a few!



Day Fourteen - On to the beach!

This morning we'll take you to the airport in Cuenca to catch a flight to the coastal city of Guayaquil. Here we'll pick you up and drive you further along the coast to the resort town of Salinas, where it's time to hit your 5-star hotel and then hit the beach!



Days Fifteen and Sixteen - Relaxation time

These two days are all about you kicking back on the beach and enjoy all the facilities and amenities your luxury hotel has to offer. All together now: deep breath... and relax...



Day Seventeen - Back to Quito

After breakfast this morning, we will pick you up and take you back to Guayaquil for the short flight 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...

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!



Trekking in the Andes - from £200pp

If you like a bit of adventure, why not have a look at some of our treks in the Andes... We have treks from 2-10 days in some of South America's most beautiful National Parks.



Machalilla National Park - from £200pp

Why not take a couple of days and head a little further up the Pacific coast to the Machalilla National Park. As well as stunning beaches, off the beaten track so you can have them all to yourself, you also go whale-watching in the seas off Puerto Lopez and you can even stay in a top-of-the-range fabulous beachside treehouse!

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!