

EXPLORE ECUADOR & GALAPAGOS

TAILOR MADE TRAVEL

You can also book this trip together with a cruise on the Galapagos Islands. Take a look at the wide range of cruises on <https://explore-ecuador.com/>

This is a sample trip!!! The order of travel, excursions, hotels, it can all be adjusted.

A different hotel? Look at the range of hotels per region or city: <https://explore-ecuador.com/the-mainland/hotels-in-ecuador/>

A different excursion? You can choose per region or city: <https://explore-ecuador.com/the-mainland/excursions-in-ecuador/>

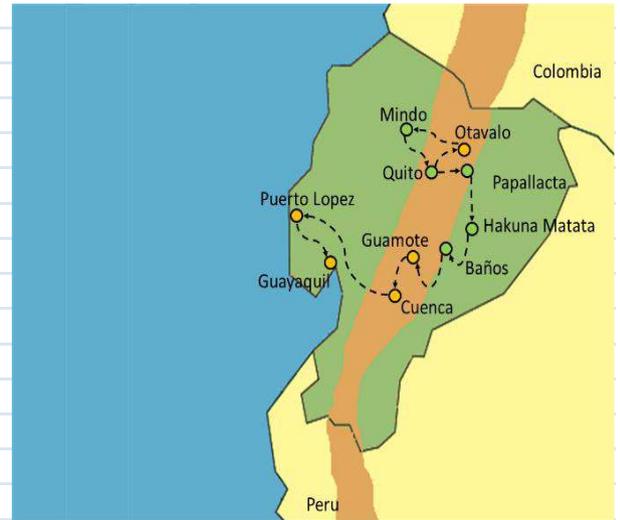
Family trip -13 days Andes + 4 days Amazon + 4 days Coast - STANDARD

Guide price 2 664 USD per person (based on min. 2 people)

TRAVEL SCHEDULE

- day 1 arrival in Quito - transfer to Otavalo
- day 2 Acclimatization (suggestions: market visit - Peguche waterfall)
- day 3 horseback ride to Lake Cuicocha and transfer to Mindo
- day 4 the waterfalls of Mindo
- day 5: choice of: Tubing / Canopy / Canyoning
- day 6 transfer to Quito (visit "active equator museum")
- day 7 via Papallacta to Amazon rainforest
- day 8 day 2 Amazon
- day 9 day 3 Amazon
- day 10 day 4 Amazon - to Baños
- day 11 The route of the waterfalls
- Day 12: Rafting on the Rio Pastaza (class III for beginners) and transfer to Guamote
- Day 13 Visit to indigenous communities - Indian cooking
- Day 14 Market visit (on Thursday) - via Ingapirca to Cuenca
- Day 16 Gualaceo, Chordeleg and Sigsig
- Day 16 Day off in Cuenca
- Day 17 To Puerto Lopez
- day 18 Playa Los Frailes
- day 19 Isla de la Plata + whale watching
- day 20 Bola de Oro
- day 21 to Guayaquil airport - return flight

GOOGLE MAPS? CLICK ON THE MAP



day 1

Arrival in Quito

Transfer from Quito to Otavalo in private car (SP-language driver)

You will be picked up by a Spanish-speaking driver at the hotel (or airport) and taken in a private car to the hotel in Otavalo. This drive through the Andes Mountains takes about 2 hours.

Stay with a local family with breakfast and dinner (double)

In the cozy village of La Calera, just outside Cotacachi, you will stay on the farm of an indigenous family. You will have a small but comfortable house with private bathroom with hot water and a fireplace. The inhabitants of La Calera live from horticulture (vegetables, corn and beans), and from weaving. You will have breakfast together with the family and get the chance to really go 'local'. If you want you can participate in the daily activities of this family.

There is no better way to get to know the life of the local community! La Calera has a pleasant spring climate, so would you like to have lunch or dinner with the family? You can coordinate this perfectly with them.

day 2

Acclimatization - we suggest two activities that can be done on one's own:

Otavalo - visit to the indigenous market (on your own)

This market in the Plaza de Ponchos is without a doubt the most famous indigenous market in Ecuador. You will find a huge selection of artesanate. The best day to visit this market is on Saturday. There are 4 markets going on simultaneously in different parts of the city. But the artesanate market now also goes on the other days of the week - it is much quieter then. This in turn has its advantages.

Hike to Peguche waterfall (on own)

The 18-meter-high Peguche waterfall is located 4 kilometers south of Otavalo in a beautiful natural park... The local population of Otavalo celebrates the solar festival of Inti Raymi there on June 21. During several days purification rituals are held here. But also during the rest of the year the park is worth a visit.

Stay with a local family with breakfast and dinner (double)

day 3

On horseback to Lake Cuicocha

On horseback, enjoy the vistas of the Andes, indigenous villages and a visit to Cuicocha Lake. By carriage, we trek to the village of La Calera, where our horseback ride (5 hours) begins through the countryside and past indigenous villages. When we get to Lake Cuicocha, we rest for a while and take a walk or (optional) a short boat ride on the lake. Then we return to the farm and from there by car to the starting point.

Difficulty: moderate

Duration: approx. 7 hours

Included: English speaking local guide, private transport, horse with equipment

Required: sun protection, fleece or pullover, water, minimum experience with horses

Recommended: camera, clothing that can get dirty

Transfer from Otavalo to Mindo in private car

During this 3-hour drive through the Andes, you will cross the valley of Guayllabamba and pass the equator monument of Mitad del Mundo.

Mindo Garden Lodge - double room with breakfast

A few kilometers outside Mindo, this eco-lodge is located in a private nature reserve of 300 hectares of cloud forest. The lodge is located on the banks of the Mindo River and consists of several small cottages. There is an excellent restaurant with bar. You can set up excursions of several days here. Bicycle tours and other sports activities are also among the possibilities. The most beautiful butterfly farm in Mindo is within walking distance. Mindo Gardens also has some beautiful self-guided hiking trails: you can make a beautiful hike in pristine cloud forest on your own.

For more info see www.mindogarden.com.ec

day 4

The waterfalls of Mindo

By car, after a 20-minute drive through the forest, we reach the entrance of the park. Here you cross a valley with a width of 530 meters with a cable car. Once across, there are trails that lead to seven different waterfalls. It is a beautiful walk with the opportunity to swim and with beautiful views. However, it can be quite busy on weekends.

Duration: 4 hours. Included: transport, English speaking guide and entrance.

Mindo Garden Lodge - double room with breakfast

day 5

Choose from the following activities

Tubing on the Rio Mindo (Level 1)

Floating on the Rio Mindo you can enjoy the sun and the tranquility of the forest. Those who like more adventure can do the rapids of the Río Cinto or the Río Blanco. A local guide will provide you with a helmet and life jacket and keep the raft under control. Tubing is the perfect way to cool off on a hot day. This trip takes your choice of 1.5 hours, 2.5 hours or 4 hours and includes transport, equipment and guide.

Canopy: soar above the cloud forest

This is one of the most popular sports in Mindo. This adventure gives you the chance to zoom in on the upper layer of the cloud forest trees. It gives you the thrill of flying, while enjoying the beautiful landscapes below. During this activity you are always accompanied by specialized supervisors. There are 10 canopy lines from easy to hard. Duration: 3 hours. Included: transport H/T, canopy with attendant.

Canyoning in Mindo

Equipped with ropes, harness, helmet, gloves you descend into the middle of a waterfall, or from a bridge in the river. You will be accompanied by an experienced guide who will guide you step-by-step through this unforgettable experience.

Mindo Garden Lodge - double room met ontbijt

day 6

Transfer from Mindo to Quito with on the way visit Equator Museum

After about an hour of driving we arrive at the equator. There we make a stop at the Intiñan museum where you get information about the different indigenous peoples of Ecuador, the traditions and also do some tests that show that you are at the real equator. Afterwards we also make a short stop at the old monument of the Equator where you can take some pictures. Included: transportation in a private car. Not included: entrance to museums and meals en route. Duration: 4 to 5 hours.

San José de Puenbo - colonial room double with breakfast

In rural Puenbo - a 20-minute drive from the airport - you will find this rural hacienda with 4 hectares of greenery and gardens. The hotel has 78 rooms of 4 classes (Colonial, Superior, Suite campestre and Cottage). There is a swimming pool, a gym and a good restaurant. You can go horseback riding and rent bicycles.

For more info see www.sanjosedepuenbo.com

day 7

Transfer from Quito to Archidona in private car - with visit to Papallacta (SP-language driver)

This road trip first leads you high into the Andes - where we stay for a time in Papallacta - before descending into the Amazon jungle, towards Archidona. Papallacta is a small village located on the edge of Cayambe Coca National Park. It is best known for its beautiful volcanic thermal baths. You can also hike there very nicely. You will spend a few hours in Papallacta where you can choose to hike in the National Park or relax in the thermal baths (the entrance to the baths at a cost of 8 USD is not included). Duration: 3 hours driving and 2 hours stop in Papallacta.

Hakuna Matata - Family trip 4D/3N Cabin double

This 150-hectare private hacienda is the place to enjoy the upper Amazon jungle to the fullest. Hakuna Matata is located on the banks of the crystalline Inquillaqui River, between 600 and 850 meters above sea level. The temperature there is ideal. There is a large swimming pool of 22 by 27 meters, a good restaurant with bar and you will also find several marked hiking trails. All rooms have their own terrace and bathroom with hot shower. You can go for nice walks, organize excursions or just lie by the pool.

All included from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on the last dy.

For more information, see www.hakunamatata-ecuador.com

day 8

Hakuna Matata - day 2

View the attached program

day 9

Hakuna Matata - day 3

day 10

Hakuna Matata - day 4

Transfer from Archidona to Baños in private car

This car ride of 3 to 4 hours takes you through the Amazon forest via Tena to Puyo, at the foot of the Andes. From there it is a one and a half hour steep climb up the Andes to Baños.

Isla de Baños - standard room double with breakfast

Hotel Isla de Baños is located in a quiet neighborhood on the outskirts of Baños and is surrounded by a beautiful tropical garden. There is a good Argentine restaurant (closed on Mondays and Tuesdays) and a nice spa. There are 26 rooms in total, both standard rooms and suites. The staff is very friendly and helpful. There is a laundry service and you can rent bikes. The price includes the use of the wooden "sauna tubs". The spa has a small extra cost.

For more info see www.isladebanios.com

day 11

The route of the waterfalls

Today the guide will let you discover several beautiful places in and around Baños by car. You will be able to visit the beautiful waterfall El Pailon del Diablo, cross the Pastaza with a cable car and visit la Casa Del Arbol, where the famous swing is located.

Including: transport, English speaking guide, snack and entrance to the visits

Duration: 7 hours

Isla de Baños - standard room double met ontbijt

day 12

Rafting on the Rio Pastaza (level 3 - beginners)

You can make this trip both in the morning and in the afternoon. We leave by car from Baños to Cumandá, where there is a short explanation about the safety regulations. The descent along the river takes about an hour and a half. Then we will have a small lunch and return to Baños.

Difficulty: easy.

What to bring: bathing suit, towel, mosquito spray, sun protection and dry clothes. Included: neoprene suit, life jacket, helmet, water shoes, kayak, guide, transport and packed lunch.

Duration: half day

Transfer from Baños to Guamote in private car (SP language driver)

The driver will pick you up at the hotel in Baños. This drive through the mountains takes about 3 hours.

Inti Sisa - standard room double with breakfast

Guamote is a small mountain village, known for its indigenous people and traditions. As part of an integral development project, Inti Sisa offers 23 beautiful guest rooms here. All rooms have a private bathroom. In addition, you can eat in the guesthouse. The project offers support to the local inhabitants of Guamote. On Thursday morning you step out of the door and end up at the most beautiful indigenous market in Ecuador. The project is run by a few Flemish volunteers.

For more info see www.intisisa.com

day 13

Visit to the indigenous villages around Guamote - private excursion

Today we take a closer look at how the indigenous people live here in this region. After visiting the center of Inti Sisa in Guamote, we head into the mountains. We visit an indigenous school where the children explain how they are taught here. We visit a local weaver who makes ponchos out of alpaca wool and end at an indigenous family who tells about their life in the village. Along the way, you'll get info on the history of the area and the local culture. Those who wish can then return to Guamote on foot (1.5 hours).

Duration: 4 hours.

Included: English speaking guide; snack and drink.

Indigenous cooking class

From Inti Sisa we go to the market to buy all the ingredients to make a fruit salad and empanadas. Then you will learn from the native kitchen staff of Inti Sisa how these delicious dishes are prepared. Afterwards everything will be eaten together.

Included: visit to the market, ingredients and coffee or tea

Duration: approx. 2 hours

Inti Sisa - standard room double met ontbijt

day 14

The indigenous market of Guamote (on its own)

Thursday is market day in Guamote. This market is unique in South America. On market day, all the indigenous people from the surrounding villages flock to the market. But also from all over, from the coast and other regions, traders come to Guamote with their trucks. In this market, goods from the highlands are exchanged with those from the plains and the coastal region. There is a large market for cattle and small livestock, as well as clothing, all kinds of food and household goods. Stalls are located not only in the city squares, but also in several streets.

Transfer from Guamote to Cuenca with visit to Ingapirca on the way (SP-language driver)

From Guamote you will drive in a private car to Cuenca. On the way you will visit the most famous Inca ruins from Ecuador.

Duration: 5.5 hours (3.5 hours driving and 2 hours visit to Ingapirca)

Excluding the entrance to the ruins to be paid on the spot: 6 USD.

Posada del Angel - standard room double with breakfast

Posada del Angel is located right in the colonial center of Cuenca. The building is built in colonial style and was built about 120 years ago, by order of a local priest. The building has since been thoroughly restored. Today the hotel is run by a local family and has 22 rooms. There is a small restaurant, but you can also go into town for the many cozy restaurants in the city.

For more info see hostalposadadelangel.wordpress.com

day 15

Gualaceo, Chordeleg and Sigsig

A 45-minute drive from Cuenca in a subtropical valley is the town of Gualaceo, known for its artesanate, its folklore and for the beautiful river that runs through it. First, we visit a family that makes beautiful textile work. After this, we visit Ecuador 's largest orchid garden and then continue to Chordeleg which is known for its fine jewelry and precious metal forging. We have lunch in a local restaurant and then we visit Sigsig where the Panama hats are woven and a workshop where guitars are produced.

Bring: protection from sun and rain, camera and water.

Duration: 8 hours

Includes: English speaking guide, transportation, lunch

Excluding: entrance orchid garden and museums

Posada del Angel - standard room double with breakfast

day 16

Cuenca - Visit the colonial city under your own strenght

Cuenca resembles Spain in the 17th century. The cobbled streets, the flower-filled squares, the old houses with balconies, wooden shutters and latticework... Everything breathes the atmosphere of colonial times. But Cuenca is also a culturally high-quality city with some beautiful museums. In the green area you have the ruins of Inga Pirca, the National Park Cajas, the villages Chordeleg, Gualaceo, Sigsig and Baños, ...

Posada del Angel - standard room double with breakfast

day 17

Transfer from Cuenca to Puerto Lopez in private car (SP language driver)

This scenic drive takes you from Cuenca with a local driver through the highest peaks of the Andes to sea level. You pass all types of climate and vegetation on the way. You leave in the morning from the paramo vegetation and eucalyptus trees (around 4000 meters above sea level) to reach the beach in the afternoon between banana plantations, kapok trees and sugar cane plantations.

Duration: 7 hours

Not included: meal on the way

Mandala lodge- standard cabin double with breakfast (high season)

Hosteria Mandala is located on the beach of Puerto Lopez, a few minutes walk from the village. This very nice hotel, run by a Swiss-Italian couple has standard cabins, superior cabins and family cabins (with refrigerator). The Mariposa cabin also has a kitchenette. The hotel is located on the edge of Machalilla National Park and you can make beautiful excursions in the area. The hotel breathes the tropical atmosphere of the Ecuadorian coast.

For more information see www.hosteriamandala.info

day 18

The beaches of Los Frailes and Agua Blanca

Today you will visit Ecuador's most beautiful beach. You can get to the beach by car or by bike. Los Frailes is about three kilometers away from Puerto Lopez. At the beginning of the hike you will first get some explanation about the area. The hike then leads you to La Tortugueta, a beach with black sand, a lookout with a view over the coast to finally reach a beach with beautiful white sand. Here you can stay for a while before we leave for Agua Blanca. Agua Blanca is an archaeological site in the middle of a nature reserve. Here you can immerse yourself in a lake that has medicinal properties due to its volcanic origin. Then we return to the hotel. Difficulty rate: light.

Duration: approximately 6 hours. Included: English speaking guide, transportation, entrance to the archaeological site and lunch. Bring with you: protection from the sun and rain, sport shoes and swimming gear.

Mandala lodge- standard cabin double with breakfast (high season)

day 19

La Plata Island or small Galapagos

During this excursion you will visit this beautiful island, also called little Galapagos. It is located 25 km (about 1.5 hours by boat) off the coast of Puerto Lopez. You will find, in addition to frigate birds and tropicbirds, blue-footed, masked and red-footed boobies and even some Galapagos albatrosses. The island can only be visited with a guide from the park and you may not deviate from the official paths. You take a 2 hour and a half hike there with the nature guide. Then you return to the boat where you can spot turtles. Then you can snorkel in the bay for an hour among sea turtles and colorful fish. On the way to the island you can spot humpback whales between June and September, which use the area in large numbers as a nursery. Level of difficulty: light. Duration: 7 hours approximately. Included: English speaking guide, transportation, lunch box and snorkel gear. Excluded: entrance to National Park 1 USD pp. Bring: windbreaker for the boat, sneakers, water bottle, sun protection, swimming gear and camera.

Mandala lodge- standard cabin double with breakfast (high season)

day 20

On horseback to Bola de Oro (Machalilla National Park) - day excursion

This day excursion takes about 7 hours and gets you to know the interior of the coast. On horseback you trek with a guide from the village of El Pital, along the Rio Blanco through the forest into the mountains. You follow a path of about 8 km through the cloud forest up to 800 meters altitude. You cross some local communities that live off the tagua (vegetable ivory). The screams of the parrots accompany you throughout the day. There are many howler monkeys, capuchin monkeys and anteaters here.

Children over 10 years old can take this excursion. Included: return transportation, local guide, horses and packed lunch.

Mandala lodge- standard cabin double met ontbijt (hoogseizoen)

day 21

Transfer from Puerto Lopez to Guayaquil airport in private car (SP language driver)

You will be transferred from the hotel in Puerto Lopez to the airport in Guayaquil (drive of +/- 4 hours).

Return flight from Guayaquil

Total price of this travel proposal per person

2.664 USD

Notes

- * Prices quoted are in US Dollars and apply only when paying in USD directly to our Quito - Ecuador office. Transfer costs are borne by the customer.
- * All transfers are done with a private car and Spanish-speaking driver unless otherwise stated
- * Listed trips and excursions are examples from a wider range. Check out our website for more choice.
- * This travel proposal is based on 2-person standard rooms, unless stated otherwise. Supplements for single or deluxe rooms are available on request.
- * This travel proposal is non-binding, depending on the travel period and subject to availability.
- * The final travel program must take into account certain fixed days of activities, such as native markets, departure dates of cruises and flights, etc. We do everything possible to optimally insert mentioned activities into the program.

Included

- * All hotel stays with breakfast, transfers, domestic flights and excursions as mentioned in the program.
- * Lunch and dinner in accordance with the program if stated.

Not included

- * Drinks, tips and expenses of a personal nature.
- * **International flights to and from Ecuador.**
- * Travel or cancellation insurance.

Quito, 14/03/2022

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