

8 Days Ecuador and Galapagos

QUITO- PAPALLACTA – TENA- COTOCOCHA – QUITO- QUILOTOA-GALAPAGOS

Day 1: QUITO

Arrival at Mariscal Sucre International Airport.

Your driver will take you from the airport to the hotel, allowing you to get a first impression of this bustling capital tucked between the Andes mountains and radiating Inca history (1 hour).

Day 2: City Tour - "MITAD DEL MUNDO" (Equator Line)

Have breakfast at your hotel before setting out on a panoramic city tour of Quito. The capital of Ecuador has many hidden depths and a wealth of colonial and pre-Columbian architecture to be explored. Beautiful vistas, colonial churches with ornate roofs are all in plentiful supply as you make your way through this mountaineous metropolis. The city was founded in the 16th Century on the ruins of an Inca city 9,350ft above sea level, making it the second highest capital city in the world. It also has one of the best-preserved historic centers in the world, and walking among the colonial architecture gives you the feeling that you have entered a moment frozen in time and transports you back to the time of the Spanish invasion when the first European settlers set foot on the land. It is no wonder that Quito was the first city to be named as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

After the city tour (4 hours) you will visit the Ciudad Mitad del Mundo (The City of the Equator) and the Intiñan Museum

1. "Ciudad Mitad del Mundo"

The Ciudad Mitad del Mundo is a park that contains the historic monument marking the line of the Equator. It is impossible not to feel the energy of the Earth humming deep below the ground in this special place, surrounded by dramatic vistas on all sides. This truly is ground zero – 0 degrees latitude, 0 minutes, 0 seconds.

2. Intiñan Museum

Inaugurated in 1960, the Intiñan Museum offers a fascinating insight into the lives of the ancient indigenous tribes that previously inhabited Ecuador, such as the Shuar and the Woranis. It also explains in incredible detail the intricate methods used by the Incas to determine the center of the earth, and includes an installation detailing the death ceremonies carried out by different tribes.

At the end of the day, return to the hotel.

Day 3: QUITO – PAPALLACTA – TENA

After a delicious breakfast at your hotel, you will have on a tour of the area surrounding Quito. First stop is Papallacta, a beautiful and quaint village nestled between the Andes. Further up the road is the wilderness of the Ecuadorian Amazon. All around, at 3,300m altitude, is the grandeur and might of the Andes Mountains. Papallacta sits on the border of these two terrains, serving as an enchanting link between mountain and rainforest. The village is known for its world-renowned thermal springs, which offer the perfect opportunity to relax and recharge your batteries. Located on the banks of the Papallacta River, there are nine thermal pools and three cold water pools containing a number of minerals where the magical water of the Andes will cleanse your spirit and heal your body.

After experiencing the power of the thermal baths, you will continue on to Tena and to the Cotacocha Lodge, where you can relax in the beautiful verdant surroundings and take a dip in the pool to the sounds of birdsong and monkey calls. The beautiful jungle lodge blends into the tropical environment and gives you a truly unique opportunity to live side by side with a plethora of exotic wildlife. A sumptuous candlelit dinner is served in the picturesque restaurant. By night, sit by the majestic fireplace, surrounded by the pitch black of the Amazon after dark, as your guides explain the next day's activities.

Day 4: COTOCOCHA - QUITO

Breakfast at the lodge

After a tropical breakfast at the lodge, you will take a typical Ecuadorian canoe ride upstream to a secluded beach where a fascinating hike begins, giving you a chance to spot the myriad flora and fauna on display. You may spot wildlife as diverse as toucans, monkeys, thousands of bird species, armadillos, sloths and maybe even a jaguar! At the end of the hike you will reach the "Cascada de Latas" waterfall where you can unwind under the crashing water of the Amazon and take in the spectacular scene. Arriving back at the lodge you will be treated to a delicious lunch. The return to the lodge can be via canoe or by a tubing, an enchanting journey in a rubber ring down the gentle Napo river. After lunch you will take a shorter hike around the jungle and return to Quito, where the next leg of your journey awaits you.

Day 5: QUITO – QUILOTOA

After a typical Ecuadorian breakfast, your driver will take you to the edge of the spectacular Quilotoa Crater. Formed after a catastrophic eruption almost 600 years ago, what remains is a breathtaking vista ranging from sheer rock faces bearing the marks of volcanic eruptions, and the most stunning turquoise lake in the middle of it all. Make your way to the lake's edges to take in the view from a different perspective, On the way, you will pass by the Tigua workshop, a studio featuring indigenous artists who will showcase their work and explain their ancient methods. You will also have the option to kayak on the beautiful lake, a truly dreamlike experience.

Day 6: QUITO – GALAPAGOS

After breakfast at your hotel, you will be driven to the airport to catch a flight to the Galapagos Islands. This incredibly fertile land is home to thousands of different species including many that are indigenous to the islands, not to mention some of the most dramatic and jaw-droppingly spectacular landscape on the planet. Once landed in Baltra, a guide will take you to Santa Cruz Island. Once there, you will see the world-famous giant tortoises in their natural habitat, the incredible Galapagos. Many other species such as finches, bird wizards and vegetation such as the escelacias forests and matazamos can also be seen. Later on, you will have time to explore Puerto Ayora, which contains several interesting shops.

Day 7: GALAPAGOS

Visits to the islands are confirmed one week before arrival. Visits could be to the following islands (one island per day):

- **North Seymour Island**

North Seymour Island is a small island near to Baltra Island. It was cast from the molten fires of an underwater lava formation, and is covered with vegetation. It is home to the striking blue-footed boobies, as well as the spectacular magnificent frigate birds, with their crimson chests setting them apart from the surrounding wildlife. Many species of birds flourish here thanks to favourable conditions, and one must keep a keen eye out for the diverse and numerous mating rituals that take place as birds offer gifts, dance, sing and perform all manner of acts to win the affections of their other half. The sheer volume of life on display is astonishing and seems like worlds away from the busy streets of Quito.

Plazas Island

South Plaza is a small island off the east coast of Santa Cruz in the Galapagos. It is characterized by the colourful Sesuvium vegetation, which transforms from an emerald green colour in the rainy months to a bright orange and purple during the dry season. The island is bursting with life on all sides, with a particular highlight being the playful sealion colonies who gather on the shore and hunt for their supper.. The abundance of Cactus Opuntia is home to a large land iguana population. The rocky terrain gives one the sensation of being far away from home on some enchanting and mysterious planet.

Day 8: GALAPAGOS OUT

Breakfast at the hotel.

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Quito or Guayaquil.

The price of the program for 1 pax

	SGL	DBL	TPL
Mainland Ecuador and Galapagos Services	\$3.735	\$2.400	\$2.265

***SGL price – for solo traveler**

Single supplement from 2 passengers: USD 527

The price of the program includes:

- Private transportation and tour with English speaking guide in Mainland Ecuador as described on the itinerary, except Amazon shared excursions;
- Shared transportation and tours with English speaking guide at the Galapagos Islands as described on the itinerary;
- Accommodation as listed on the itinerary;
- Meals as listed on the itinerary;
- Entrance fees as listed on the itinerary.

The price of the program does not include:

- Flight to/from Galapagos Islands, USD 550 per person.
- Galapagos National Park Entrance Fee / USD 100 pp (subject to change);
- Ingala Transit Control Card / USD 20 pp (subject to change);
- International flights;
- Travel and health insurance;
- Tips;
- Personal expenses;
- Items not specified.

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(ADA-25/07/2019)