



PROJECT DOSSIER

AMAZON & ANDES

QUITO to RIO
OR
RIO to QUITO
9 weeks
9,000 kms (approx.)

**Ecuador, Colombia,
Venezuela, Brazil**



Itinerary Guideline

QUITO to RIO

- Week 1:** Across the equator, to Indian markets and colonial towns of the northern Andes. Colombia, San Agustin & 5,000 year old stonework in the Valley of the Statues.
- Week 2:** The Magdalena valley to Bogota. Cucuta - forest & mountain resorts of the Cordillera, to Caribbean beaches at Cartagena.
- Week 3:** Venezuela - City of Caracas & beaches of the Caribbean. Motorised canoes to delta islands in the mouths of the Orinoco.
- Week 4:** The Orinoco, & Ciudad Bolivar on the Angostura narrows. Option to fly over Angel Falls.
- Week 5:** Tepuys and mesas of the Gran Sabana jungle. To Brazil, the equator again - and the Amazon at Manaus.
- Week 6:** Small boats & on foot along the banks and backwaters of the Amazon & Rio

Negro. River barge & ferry on the Rio Madeira towards Porto Velho.

- Week 7:** Porto Velho, southern boom town of Amazonia's future or destruction. To Mato Grosso forests & the wildlife of the Pantanal marshes.
- Week 8:** From Pantanal to frontier farmlands of the Brazilian plateau.
- Week 9:** Capital Brasilia, the gold rush town of Ouro Preto, and the Siren call of Rio de Janeiro.

RIO to QUITO

- Week 1:** Rio to Teresopolis, the gold rush town of Ouro Preto & the new capital of Brasilia.
- Week 2:** Frontier farmlands of the Brazilian plateau into the Pantanal marshes.
- Week 3:** Wildlife of the Pantanal marshes to forests of the Mato Grosso. Porto Velho

- river boom town on fringes of the Amazon.

- Week 4:** River barge & ferry down the Rio Madeira to the Amazon and Manaus. Small boats & on foot along banks and backwaters of the Amazon & Rio Negro from Manaus.
- Week 5:** North across the equator to Venezuela, the Tepuys and mesas of the Gran Sabana.
- Week 6:** Ciudad Bolivar on the Angostura narrows of the Orinoco. Option to fly over Angel Falls. Motorised canoe to delta islands in the mouths of the Orinoco.
- Week 7:** From the Orinoco to beaches of the Caribbean & the city of Caracas. To Colombia and Cartagena.
- Week 8:** To Cucuta - forest & mountain resorts of the Andean Cordillera, and Bogota.
- Week 9:** The Magdalena valley to San Agustin & 5,000 year old stonework in the Valley of the Statues. Ecuador, to Indian markets and colonial towns of the northern Andes, the southern hemisphere again to Quito.

Highlights & Route

ECUADOR & COLOMBIA

Quito, most attractive of South American capitals lies within 25 kms of the equator. But at an altitude of 2,900m it enjoys a year round spring climate. North through Guayllabamba Gorge & Ecuador's dairylands to Indian town of Otavalo & its weekly fair - shawls and ponchos, pottery & livestock, food & cockfights. Volcanic heights of the northern Andes to Popayan, old colonial town & pre-Columbian pyramid. San Agustin & Valley of the Statues - hundreds of rough hewn stone figures; of animals, gods and men - eerie relics of an ancient Indian culture from 3300BC, of which nothing more is known. The towns and warm tropical climates of the Magdalena valley; agave and bamboo, palm and sugar cane. Then upwards, to the high plateau of Colombia & Bogota at 2,600m. The Gold Museum holds thousands of priceless Inca artefacts that escaped the plundering Conquistadors and their quest for El Dorado. North to the Caribbean coast and Cartagena with its colonial fortress and beaches.

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VENEZUELA

Caracas, perched in a rift of the coastal ranges is South America's most modern capital. Museums and cathedrals measure the country's past, the new city stays up late - with cafes, restaurants and a nightlife to match any taste. Drive the warm Caribbean shoreline to Cumana. Founded in 1520 this sea port is the continent's oldest Hispanic city. Beyond are quiet fishing villages and the best of Venezuela's beaches. Next inland to Caripe & the Guacharo caves. Discovered by Humboldt, the chain of underground caverns have been penetrated for 10 kilometres along a clear flowing stream. Some 30,000 blind, hawk-like guacharo birds live in the first series of caves, streaming out at dusk to feed through the night on oil-palm fruit. To Barrancas where the Orinoco widens into its delta of marshland and islands. By motorised canoe (3 days) along the delta waterways, to Indian villages and hidden wildlife among the tidal canos inlets, camping at night on the islands. Drive to Ciudad Bolivar at the foot of the Guyana Highlands. Ocean vessels ply 400 kms up the fast flowing Orinoco to dock here, its markets trade in gold from the highlands and beyond. (Optional flight to Angel Falls, approx. US\$200. Streams gather on the tabletop of Auyan Tepui to leap its rim and drop 980 vertical metres into the jungle below. Highest falls in the world, unknown until 1937 when they were spotted from the air). To the interior, and tracks through the Gran Sabana - of jungle hung Tepuys and flat-topped mountains, high waterfalls and the distant view of Mt Roraima. To primeval forests and the Serra Pacaraima - Amazon divide where rivers must decide to flow north to the Orinoco or south into the Amazon.

BRAZIL

To Boa Vista and the Rio Branco,. Then Manaus, great trading port in the heart of the river system where the oily black waters of the Rio Negro slowly fuse with the massive flow of the Amazon, 8 kms across. Built on the wave of the 19th century rubber boom, Manaus declined until the advent of the Trans Amazon road. The famous opera house is restored, museums show the rise and fall of fortune, and a rubber factory demonstrates the process that started it all.

South from Manaus the road is lost to nature's brilliant regeneration. We travel by riverboat and its truck-carrying barge slowly up the Rio

Madeira. Nights in hammocks on deck, days of measured tropical pace. To Porto Velho, roads to the outside world and all development's dilemmas. The Pantanal marshes & Mato Grosso - vast territory of legends, malaria, myth and adventure. A balancing act of the wild and the worldly. Ocelot, anteaters & wildcat rustle the grasses, river banks teem with alligators, cattle graze uneasily. Cuiaba and the red soil uplands of the Brazilian plateau to Brasilia - new federal capital of sweeping avenues & futuristic buildings, architecture at odds with its remote surroundings. To Ouro Preto, built on dreams and sacks of fortune in the fierce labour of open gold pits. And then, in sudden descent from the highlands and all of nature's hard reality, the embracing and seductive arms of Rio de Janeiro. Bays and islands, soft warmth and pleasures in the most spectacular setting of all cities.

PLEASE NOTE

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes together with the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings.

DELAYS OR FORCED ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

The possibility of some delay en route is planned into this project and we usually arrive on time. But, by the very nature of the journey, it should be recognised that longer delays outside our control can still happen. Although these are rare in South America, it is still suggested that you do not make any firm commitments within 3 to 4 days of the scheduled end date of the expedition. If we are delayed en route, no additional payments to Encounter Overland will be asked of you.

Major forced changes to our expeditions are also rare in South America. When they do happen it is usually because of border closures, natural disasters or civil insurrection making it impossible or imprudent to enter an affected country or region. In the worst of cases this could involve an over-flight or sea passage. If this were to happen, Encounter Overland would meet the first US\$300 per person of the fare. Should more than this be needed, a contribution from you of

up to (but not exceeding) US\$300 would be required. Any further amount beyond this would again be met by Encounter Overland.

GROUP SIZE

24 max. including Encounter staff. Local guides will be employed at certain places of interest where their knowledge is advantageous to our visit.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The project has few significant physical demands other than those imposed by a travelling lifestyle in the hot and very humid conditions of the Amazon.

THE LOCAL PAYMENT (as in the brochure)

This is the payment made to the Project Leader at the point of departure. This payment must be made paid in US\$ dollars, either in cash notes or recognised Travellers Cheques. This payment completes the total inclusive price of the project. This amount will be utilised by the project Leader to cover a proportion but not all of the 'on the ground' running costs of this project. There are no hidden extra payments.

INCLUDED IN EXPEDITION COST

Transport, food (except as noted under Meals Cooking & Food below), camping equipment & supplies. Hotels in Bogota, Cartagena, Caracas Manaus, Ciudad Bolivar & Porto Velho. Local guides, entrance fees & activities as detailed from published starting date of expedition until arrival in Quito or Rio. There are no kitties or similar en route payment funds.

EXPEDITION COST DOES NOT COVER

Local Payment, flights to/from Rio/Quito, transfers to/from airports & airport taxes, meals in Bogota, Cartagena, Caracas, Manaus, Ciudad Bolivar & Porto Velho (see Meals, Cooking & Food below), vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Some entry fees to museums and sights (minimal cost), and optional flight from Ciudad Bolivar over Angel Falls (approx. US\$200).

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard Encounter truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent,

tables & stools, light, cooking equipment & utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit etc. Lightweight tents/bivouacs & cooking equipment on Orinoco Delta (1 night in a stilted hut) and in hammocks on Amazon/Rio Negro River project.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

Medium/lightweight sleeping bag; an easily portable soft bag or backpack and a daypack. Personal clothing and strong footwear. No specialised clothing or equipment is necessary. You probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information.

TRANSPORT

Encounter expedition truck, motorised boats in Orinoco Delta, river ferry boat and barge Manaus - Porto Velho, riverboat and on foot Rio Negro/Amazon jungle project from Manaus.

ACCOMMODATION

Traveller's hotels in Bogota (1 night), Cartagena (4 nights), Caracas, Ciudad Bolivar, Manaus, Porto Velho (up to 3 nights each). Hammocks on sheltered deck on river ferry Manaus to Porto Velho (approx. 4 nights). Otherwise camping throughout. Almost exclusively open or 'bush' camping with no facilities other than standard Encounter truck equipment. Basic camping/bivouacs on Orinoco delta islands (2 nights) and on Amazon/Rio Negro jungle project from Manaus (3 nights).

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfast & evening meals, picnic lunches. Expedition members involved in daily fresh food shopping & cooking. (Fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs, bread, cereals, cheese, preserves, canned & dried goods). Meals in major centres - Bogota, Cartagena, Caracas, Ciudad Bolivar, Manaus, Porto Velho, (up to 3 nights each.) Days spent in these cities relaxing or in individual sightseeing cannot easily revolve around group meals so meals here are at your own expense. We suggest you allow a total of approx. US\$210 for meals in these centres. (If we are delayed in any of these cities, Encounter Overland will arrange and meet meal costs extending beyond the initial three nights).

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the expedition, and which contains not less than 8 blank pages. Visa requirements and costs vary according to your nationality, and even then are subject to sudden change. Some visas need to be obtained before departure, others en route. Encounter or your agent can advise you of all the up to date visa requirements applicable to you, and their costs. We can also help you in obtaining any visas you may require before departure. Visas en route are applied for as a group with the assistance of your Project Leader. When considering the overall financial cost to you of joining this expedition, we suggest you use the Other Costs/Expenses column at the end of this dossier to note your visa & other expenses.

INSURANCE

You must have personal Travel Insurance to cover Adventure Travel and it must cover all the aspects described on p60 of the brochure. Please bring a copy of your policy with you to the pre-departure meeting. If your policy does not cover this minimum level then Encounter will not accept responsibility for the consequences.

MEDICAL & VACCINATIONS

All vaccination requirements and medical recommendations are detailed in the pre-departure information pack at the time of booking.

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

As a guide line we suggest you budget approx. US\$125 per week to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, laundry, souvenirs, optional activities, some museum entry fees etc. Interesting collectibles and ethnic crafts can be tempting in South America. Their cost and posting them home may not be. Apart from this, and your en route visas, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money in South America.

Optional activities: Flight over Angel Falls approx. US\$200.

(When you're in Quito it's a perfect opportunity to fly to the Galapagos Islands for a few days. But the cost of a week's trip including flights & a boat around the islands is going to be approx. US\$1000 - 1300, purchasable locally in Quito. If

you are interested, please request our Galapagos Islands Project Dossier – code GIS.
Most credit cards are accepted, (but the bill might get home quicker than you).

ARRIVING AND LEAVING

We recommend that you arrive in Rio or Quito at least 3 days before the expedition departure date to allow yourself time to acclimatise and get over intercontinental flights. Rio & Quito are both fascinating cities, in very different ways. It is safe to say that even a week in each is never time lost or wasted. Even though serious delays en route are unlikely, we would prefer that you not have any firm commitments for up to 6 days after scheduled expedition completion date.

COMBINATIONS & CONNECTING PROJECTS

'Amazon & Andes' connects with the 'Conquistador' (From Quito to Lima, Santiago & Rio - or vice versa) exploring the Andes & Inca heartlands of Peru & Bolivia, the Atacama Desert, Chile, the Patagonian lakes & alps, Argentine pampas, Paraguay & southern Brazil. Put together they form the 'South American Circle' - you might therefore be travelling with some group members who are continuing their travels on the 'South America Circle'. Or if you have less time, it connects with the "Trans Andean Explorer" from Santiago to Quito. This is a 9 week expedition through the Andes and the Inca heartland.

INTERESTING READING

100 Years of Solitude (Gabriel Garcia Marquez), The Drunken Forest (Gerald Durrell), Into the Heart (Kenneth Good). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Local Payment

Return flights.....

Visas.....

Vaccinations.....

Insurance.....

Personal Spending Money.....

Total _____

The information in this dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Encounter Overland Ltd.