



PROJECT DOSSIER

EXPEDICION ECUADORIANA

QUITO to QUITO

19 days

1,350kms by land and river including
80kms of rafting & day hikes.

Ecuador

Itinerary Guideline, Highlights & Route

Straddling the equator, bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the emerald waters of the Amazon to the east, Ecuador follows its own course. Here the northern Andes are compressed into the sharp 'Cordilleras' and a fantastic corridor of thirty volcanic peaks. Some are extinct, some just resting, many fume their smoke and contempt at the march of time. Much of her population is still pure Indian. As northernmost point of the great Inca Empire, they took pride in being the last resistance to the 16th century conquistadors. For three hundred years they absorbed, more or less peaceably, the ideas of their colonists, blending whatever they felt useful into their own age old ways and culture. Today Ecuador sparkles, a real jewel of the Andes that thoroughly enjoys being different

Day 1: Arrive Quito. The most attractive of all South America's capitals, Quito is only 25 kms south of the equator. But at an altitude of 2,800 m. the city enjoys a year round spring climate – constant 12 hours of warm daylight, 12 hours of



cool night. Fascinating walks in the old city, along narrow, cobbled stone streets lined with colonial buildings. Shuttered windows and ornate iron balconies gaze over colourful plazas. Street markets sparkle to the flash of a smile or the colours of traditional dress. And the new city prides itself on the finest variety of restaurants in the continent (Hotel).

Day 2: Drive by chartered minibus to Mt Cotapaxi National Park, where you can see llama before ascending the slopes of Ecuadors most distinctive volcanic peak. We hike up to the refuge at 4,800m taking in the breath-taking views of the Avenue of Volancoes. We overnight at a local beef farming hacienda.

Day 3: To Quilotoa Crater & Banos. Mountain backroads to the village of Zumbahua, and

rugged tracks across grey lava rock to the rim of Quilotoa Crater, filled by a beautiful emerald lake. It is an eerie land of earthquake and upheaval. Indians herd llama and alpaca on the slopes shimmer in the distance. Hike the hot steep slope to crater floor and the sulphurous shores of the lake before taking donkeys back up. Return to the 'Avenue of the Volcanoes' & drive to Banos. Overnight stay in hotel.

- Day 4:** This resort town is set in a subtropical valley overlooked by the snows of the active volcano Tungurahua. Time to relax in the hot springs, hike or ride on horseback the trails alongside gorges and rushing waterfalls, or just enjoy the cafes and Banos' famous aguardiente. (Wood carving & weaving cottage industries). Overnight stay in hotel.
- Day 5:** Banos to Baeza. Follow the Pastaza River on its course eastwards out of the Andes toward the Amazon, winding past waterfalls and thickening tropical vegetation to views across the wide flat horizons of Amazonia. Temperatures climb as the road descends to Puyo, the main centre of the Oriente. Through sugar cane and yuca plantations, to the Rio Napo and Baeza. Overnight stay in basic guesthouse.
- Day 6:** Baeza to Lago Agrio. Unsurfaced roads along the widening rivers and into the jungles of the Oriente. To the seedy and raucous frontier oil-town of Lago Agrio on the headwaters of the Rio Aguarico.
- Days 7-11:** By powered longboat down river, camping at night on the riverbanks or as guests in huts of Indian families. Into the tributaries of the Upper Amazon and on foot along narrow jungle trails. Your local guide proudly explains the uses & healing powers of forest plants. Parrots, macaws, toucans, and hundreds of species of multi-coloured birds inhabit the forest canopy. (Camping).
- Day 12:** Return by air to Quito. Free afternoon in Quito.
- Days 13 & 14:** Leaving Quito we drive to the Rio Blanco river in the western Cordillera and boarding inflatable rafts to tackle the rapids of this spectacular but challenging river. We stay in a Hacienda before

continuing down river the next day to "take out" around midday. Drive north west to the beaches of Atacames in time for a spectacular sunset.

- Days 15 & 16:** Stay in basic hotel on the beach to relax and roam the beaches.
- Day 17:** A full days drive via Quito to the Indian town of Otavalo.
- Day 18:** Time in Otavalo to explore the surrounding countryside, lakes and mountains and visit local craftsmen.
- Day 19:** Visit the Saturday market at Otavalo. Here beautiful Indian weavings, shawls and ponchos vie for attention among the livestock auctions and food stalls, and general colour and bustle of this finest of Andean weekly fairs. Return to Quito in the afternoon to end arrangements.

PLEASE NOTE

This 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 the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings.

GROUP SIZE

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

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

This is a project where you will experience a variation of extreme altitudes of up to 4,800m, to the heat & humidity of the Amazon basin can be demanding. However a person of average fitness and stamina will cope with these conditions following the sensible advice of the Project Leader. Whilst previous white water rafting experience is not necessary you need to be a swimmer.

THE LOCAL PAYMENT (as in the brochure)

This should be paid to the Project Leader at the pre departure meeting, **preferably in sucres or in US\$ dollars in cash**. 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 PROJECT COST

All transport; camping equipment & supplies on Rio Aguarico jungle project; Food - 3 meals a day (except as noted under Meals, Cooking & Food); traveller's hotel in Quito, Banos, Baeza, Lago Agrio, Otavalo, hacienda near Latacunga. Local guides & boat staff on Rio Aguarico jungle project. Entrance fees & activities as detailed from Day 1 to evening of Day 19. There are no kitties or similar en route payment funds.

PROJECT COST DOES NOT COVER

Local Payment.

International flights to/from home & Quito, transfers to/from airports & airport taxes, meals in Quito (see Meals, Cooking & Food below). Accommodation in Quito before Day 1 and on Day 19. Vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, personal clothing & equipment and items of a personal nature. Some entry fees to museums and sights (minimal cost), optional horse riding in gorges & valleys of Banos (approx. US\$15).

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Lightweight tents on the jungle project.
Mosquito nets & portable first aid kit.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A sleeping bag, rain proof jacket, backpack and small daypack. Personal clothing and supportive footwear. No specialised clothing or equipment is necessary and you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information.

TRANSPORT

Chartered modified minibus for all the road section, motorised longboats/on foot on Rio Aguarico jungle project (5 days). Inflatable rafts for the Rio Blanco river trip.

ACCOMMODATION

Traveller's hotel on multi-share basis in Quito (2-3 nights), hacienda, simple lodges & country hotels with multi-share or dormitory style accommodation Hacienda (1 night), Banos (2 nights), Baeza (1 night), Lago Agrio (2 nights) & Otavalo (1-2 nights), guesthouse (3 nights) at Atacames, camping on the jungle project (4 nights). No established camping facilities, but frequent opportunity for river/stream bathing &

basic hygiene. Accommodation on our return to Quito on Day 19 is not included.

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Restaurant & cafe meals except on the jungle project. On Rio Aguarico boat staff (vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs, bread, cereals, cheese, preserves, canned & dried goods) will cook your meals.

Meals in Quito

Our time in Quito cannot easily revolve around group meals so meals here are at your own expense. We suggest you allow US\$15 per day here, or a total of US\$45.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the project, and which contains at least 2 blank pages. Ecuadorian visa requirements are subject to change but at the moment no visas are required for brief 'tourist visits'.

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

You should budget approx. US\$75 per week to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, laundry, occasional souvenirs, optional activities, individual museum entry fees etc. Handmade articles and ethnic crafts are tempting in Ecuador and their costs are usually very reasonable (wood carving, silverwork & ceramics, Indian textiles, hand woven rugs). Apart from the above, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money in South America.

ARRIVING AT START OF THE PROJECT

There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Quito hotel at 1800 hrs on Day 1. We suggest that you arrive in Quito at latest by the morning of Day 1 to allow yourself time to rest & acclimatise after your intercontinental flights. There is plenty to see & do if you are arriving earlier: Museums & cathedrals, old city markets & shops, new city restaurants & bars, good theatres & concerts, bullfights (except Jan-March), football matches at Atahualpa Stadium.

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.

LEAVING AT END OF PROJECT

Arrangements end on the evening of Day 19 in Quito. Only very late night flight connections could be made on this day. Any flight connection could be met the next day.

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS OPTION

A 5 day or 8 day escorted boat trip around the islands can be arranged by Encounter. Cruises start/end in Baltra on Fridays or Tuesdays. The cost varies between US\$600 low season for 5 days to US\$1,200 high season for 8 days. The domestic flight to/from Quito is additional, at approx. US\$380. Full details are in the Project Dossier, code: GIS.

INTERESTING READING

100 Years of Solitude (Gabriel Garcia Marquez), Ecuador (Insight Guides), The Drunken Forest (Gerald Durrell), Amazon Wildlife (Insight Guides). 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** _____