



PROJECT DOSSIER

The CONQUISTADOR

RIO to QUITO

OR

QUITO to RIO

15 weeks

21,500kms (approx.)

**Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina,
Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador**

Itinerary Guideline

RIO to QUITO

- Week 1:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian coast and islands, Parati & colonial ports, Curitiba & Iguassu Falls.
- Week 2:** Paraguay, to Asuncion. Misiones & the Pampas lowlands of northern Argentina.
- Week 3:** Buenos Aires & Valdez Peninsula (South Atlantic sea mammals & birds).
- Week 4:** South to Patagonia - Lago Argentino, Moreno Glacier.
- Week 5:** Fitzroy Massif before visit to dramatic Torres del Paine National Park. Chile's southern peaks & fjords to Puerto Montt.
- Week 6:** Chilean Lake District & National Parks, to Santiago.
- Week 7:** Pacific beaches of central Chile, Atacama Desert to Bolivia.
- Week 8:** The Altiplano to Potosi: salt lakes & volcanoes, silver mines & old Spanish towns.
- Week 9:** La Paz, Peru & Lake Titicaca, Indians & reed islands.



- Week 10:** Urubamba Valley & Cuzco, Inca heartland. Hike Inca Trail to Machu Picchu.
- Week 11:** Inca Trail. Then dry eastern Andes, condors of the Colca Canyon. To Arequipa.
- Week 12:** Stone plains of northern Atacama, mysteries of the Nazca Lines. Ballestas Islands - Pacific seabirds & seals. Lima.
- Week 13:** Chan Chan & desert ruins of Chimú civilisation. Trujillo into Ecuador.
- Week 14:** Tropical coastal plain to Cuenca & across Andes to the upper Amazon.
- Week 15:** By jungle longboat & on foot into forest tributaries of Amazonas. To Papallacta, Quito, and snow capped peaks astride the equator.

QUITO to RIO

- Week 1:** Quito, across Andes to Papallacta, & into upper Amazon at Baeza. By jungle longboat & on foot into forest tributaries of Amazonas.

- Week 2:** Across Andes to Cuenca & tropical coastal plain of Pacific Ecuador.
- Week 3:** Peru. Into northern Atacama, Trujillo, Chan Chan & desert ruins of Chimu civilisation.
- Week 4:** Lima, Ballestas Islands - Pacific seabirds & seals. Stone plains, to mysteries of the Nazca Lines.
- Week 5:** Arequipa and into the dry eastern Andes of Peru. Condors of the Colca Canyon to the Altiplano and Cuzco.
- Week 6:** Urubamba valley & Cuzco, Inca heartland. Hike Inca Trail to Machu Picchu.
- Week 7:** Inca Trail. To Lake Titicaca, Indians & reed islands. Across lake to Bolivia, and La Paz.
- Week 8:** Across the Altiplano to Potosi: salt lakes & volcanoes, silver mines & old Spanish towns.
- Week 9:** Descend to Atacama of central Chile, & Pacific beaches north of Santiago.
- Week 10:** Santiago, south to Chilean Lake District & National Parks.
- Week 11:** Puerto Montt & Patagonia, Chile's southern fjords & peaks. To the dramatic Torres del Paine National Park.
- Week 12:** Into Argentina - the Fitroy Massif, Moreno Glacier & Lago Argentino.
- Week 13:** Western Argentina & Valdez Peninsula (South Atlantic sea mammals & birds). To Buenos Aires.
- Week 14:** North through Pampas lowlands to Paraguay & Asuncion. Guarani Indian lands & the Misiones to Iguassu Falls.
- Week 15:** Brazil - Curitiba, Parati & colonial ports, coast and islands to Rio de Janeiro.

Highlights & Route

BRAZIL & PARAGUAY

Brazilian coast & Parati - 17th century gold port. Parati was isolated from roads, and change, until a few years ago. Colonial architecture, street cafes, sandy tropical beaches. Brazilian plateau & coffee growing lands to Iguassu Falls - 275 separate falls each dropping 92m to form a cataract 3kms wide. Widest falls in the world. Mist thrown up beyond falls creates a micro-climate of thick tropical jungle, brilliant and exotic plants. By small boat to top of falls, or helicopter flight (optional, approx. US\$45) over

falls. Misiones region of Paraguay - fertile landscapes, Guarani Indian villages, Jesuit missions & Mennonite settlements. Asuncion, small capital built above wide bay in Paraguay River. Tree lined avenues, orange & jacaranda. Markets of handworked leather & fine lace.

ARGENTINA

Across the Parana river to the vast Pampas lowlands, home to rich estancias & cattle ranches of the beef barons. Buenos Aires - cosmopolitan capital of grace & panache in its architecture, people and lifestyle. The Plaza de Mayo & Casa Rosado, the pink presidential palace. Shopping & theatre district of Calle Florida, restaurants & nightlife of Boca Grande. South across the wide pampas to the nature reserves of the Valdez Peninsula on the south Atlantic. Sea lions, penguins, sea elephants, rhea & flamingos. Whales June-Nov. (Optional day boat trip into gulf waters of peninsula, approx. US\$50). To Patagonia & twin lakes of Viedma & Argentino in Parque Nacional de los Glaciares. Sheer rock pinnacles of the Fitzroys & Cerrotorre, the jagged southern Andes. Upsala & Moreno glaciers flow from their heights to shatter into icebergs on deep waters of the lakes.

CHILE

Puerto Montt & southern Chile - sky blue glacier lakes, Torres del Paine National Park, Pacific fjords, snow-rimmed volcanoes, waterfalls & forested slopes. With little development, this is considered one of finest lake regions in the world. North to Temuco & Concepcion, Andean backdrops, the Bio Bio River & Chile's wine producing valleys. Santiago, on a plain beneath Mt. Aconcagua (6,950m) - highest in South America. Wide boulevards, statues, palaces and gardens. Copper and wrought iron handicrafts, Chile's best vineyards and wineries nearby. To Serena - colonial buildings, gardens & tiled roofs on hillside above Bay of Coquimba. Fine beaches along Bay, and legends of buried pirate treasure. Pacific coastline of coves and surf, rock and sandy beaches. Then Caldera & the southern Atacama Desert - barren cliffs, eroded salt mountains & jagged rocks, forgotten harbour settlements and ghost mining towns. San Pedro de Atacama & rolling dunes of Calama. Western Andes to Bolivia.

BOLIVIA

The Altiplano (4,200m), plateau lands & high

valleys. Uyuni, huge salt lakes & pans, volcanoes & silver mines. Potosi, and old Spanish towns. La Paz - world's highest capital at 3,550m, sheltered in canyon slopes beneath Mt Illimani. Commercial and shopping areas along the Choqueyapu River. Above, in steep winding streets, vendors sell hot foods and fresh contraband: woodcarvings, alpaca rugs, herbal potions and witchcraft's recipes. Lake Titicaca, birthplace of the Sun God.

PERU

By motorboat onto the lake, to the floating reed islands of the Uros and Aymara Indians (overnight Amantani Island). Cuzco - ancient centre of the Inca Empire. Population is still mostly Indian. The streets are lined with perfect Inca stonework - arches, entryways and walls of such solid construction that they were incorporated into both colonial & modern architecture. The Inca sites, Pisac and the colossal stoneworks of Sacsayhuaman, Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley of the Incas. (Optional half-day white water rafting on Urubamba River, approx. US\$30).

Hike the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu.

- Day 1:** Drive to Chilca, meet porters. 4 hrs walking to ruins of Llactapata.
- Day 2:** Approx. 6 hours walking. Easy hike to Huayllabamba, steep trail through hill forest to 4,200m pass. Spectacular views. Descend to Pacamayo.
- Day 3:** Approx. 6 hours walking. Easier ascent to ruins of Runkuracay and Sayacmarca. Then through patches of light jungle, shrub & wildflowers to Winay-Wayna, well preserved ruins of Inca village.
- Day 4:** 2 hrs hike over steep paths & narrow bridges to stairway of the Sun Gate and Machu Picchu - lost city of the Incas. Descend to Urubamba River, hot springs and the lodge at Aguas Calientes.
- Day 5:** By train along river to Cuzco.

Altiplano to Colca Canyon - wild and remote, the deepest in the Americas, its protective walls are sanctuary to the great condor. Arequipa - city of white volcanic stone, in a beautiful valley beneath Volcan Misti. The Peruvian desert, & Nazca - huge lines, geometric shapes and representations etched into the stone plain. Nazca civilisation began around 200 BC and flourished for 800 years. Little is known, theories abound. (Optional

small plane flight over lines, approx. US\$50). By boat onto the Bay of Paracas & the Ballestas Islands - world's highest concentration of marine birds. Cormorant, gannet, flamingo, pelican & penguin; sea-lion colonies on the islands. Lima - seat of viceroys & colonial power. Gilded cathedrals and palaces, skyscrapers and chic. Museum of the Inquisition & the Gold Museum show the plunder of the Incas. Trujillo - founded by Pizarro in 1536, graceful city of colonial mansions, Spanish churches and plazas. Nearby are the pre-Inca ruins of Chan Chan, imperial citadel of the Chimu kings, 28 square kilometre site, & largest adobe city in the world. City taken in 1450 by the Incas, who copied much of its architecture in Cuzco. Here also the Humboldt Current creates the driest of all climates, and the shifting sands of the Sechura Desert. Rainfall is unknown. To Tumbes and:

ECUADOR

Desert's sudden change to Ecuador's tropical lowlands - flat mosquito coasts and banana plantations from where a million tons of the fruit are exported each year. Inca ruins of Ingapirca - fortress complex or massive solar observatory? Inland, and across the northern Andes, views of Chimborazo's smoking cone (6,300m). The hot springs & waterfalls of Banos, and the emerald green forests of the Amazon. Sugar cane and yucca plantations to Puya, the Pastaza River & Lago Agrio. By longboat, for 5 days, through the endless waterways and tributaries of the Rio Aguarico, to distant & isolated jungle villages, and the wildlife of the Amazon. Lago Agrio to Papallacta, and the streets of Quito.

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 3-4 days of the scheduled end date of The Conquistador. 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

Approx. 5 weeks spent at altitudes of 3,400-4,500m. Some effects of oxygen deprivation will be felt by all. The Hike of the Inca trail involves 4 days of moderately difficult walking at 3-4,000m through humid & forested mountain terrain. A wide range of temperatures is to be expected throughout South America.

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

All transport, food (except as noted under Meals Cooking & Food below), accommodation, camping equipment & supplies.

Hotels for – 1 night - Arequipa
1 / 2 nights - Banos
2 nights - Asuncion, Potosi
3 nights - Cuzco, Lima, La Paz,
Santiago, Buenos Aires

Local guides, communal porters on Inca Trail to carry equipment & food, 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 Asuncion, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Potosi, La Paz, Arequipa, Cuzco, Lima & Banos (see Meals, Cooking & Food below), vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Porters for personal gear on Inca Trail. Some entry fees to museums/sights (minimal cost), and any individual options as noted in Highlights and Route (cost as noted).

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 & cooking equipment on Inca Trail & on Ecuador jungle project.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A sleeping bag (4 seasons), a medium sized bag or backpack and a daypack. A recommended list of what to bring is supplied in the Pre-departure information pack at the time of booking.

TRANSPORT

Encounter expedition truck, motorboat on Lake Titicaca, Inca Trail on foot, motorboat to Ballestas Islands, longboat and on foot during the Ecuador jungle project.

ACCOMMODATION

Traveller's hotels on a multi-share basis

For – 1 night	- Arequipa
1 / 2 nights	- Banos
2 nights	- Asuncion, Potosi
3 nights	- Cuzco, Lima, La Paz, Santiago, Buenos Aires

As guests in homes of Indian families on Amantani Island - Lake Titicaca (1 night). Otherwise camping throughout. Occasional campground facilities in Brazil, Argentina & Chile. Otherwise open 'bush' camping with no facilities other than standard Encounter truck

equipment. Basic camping on Inca Trail 3 nights, lodge at Aguas Calientes 4th night. Basic Camping on the Ecuador jungle project 4 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 on Inca Trail prepared by porters.

Meals in major centres at your own expense –

For -1 night - Arequipa

1 / 2 nights - Banos

2 nights - Asuncion, Potosi

**3 nights - Cuzco, Lima, La Paz,
Santiago, Buenos Aires**

Days spent in these cities relaxing or in individual sightseeing cannot easily revolve around group meals. We suggest you allow about US\$15 per day in these cities, or a total of approx. US\$315. (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 12 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

You should allow approximately US\$145 per week to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, laundry, occasional souvenirs, optional activities, some museum entry fees etc. Interesting collectibles and ethnic crafts are extremely 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.

(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, purchased 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

You must be at our Rio or Quito hotel at 1800 hrs. two days before the departure date for the pre-departure meeting. But we recommend that you

arrive in Rio or Quito at least 3 days before 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 3 to 4 days after the scheduled project completion date.

COMBINATIONS & CONNECTING PROJECTS

'The Conquistador' connects with the 'Amazon & Andes' (From Quito to Rio or vice versa) exploring the mountains of Colombia, the coast & interior of Venezuela and the Amazon basin in Brazil. Put together they form the 'South America Circle'. You might therefore be travelling with some group members who are continuing their travels on the 'South America Circle'.

INTERESTING READING

100 Years of Solitude (Gabriel Garcia Marquez), House of the Spirits (Isabelle Allende), Streets With No Names (Atlantic Press). 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.