

## **8 days / 7 nights**

### **From the Andean highlands to coastal Guayaquil**

#### **A classic journey from Quito to Guayaquil**

During this excursion you will encounter the contrast between the Andean highlands and the Coastal lowlands of the Guayas Province. Learning about the cultural treasures, named as Unesco heritage cities such as Quito and Cuenca as well as touching to the entrance of the Amazon in Baños and visiting 3 beautiful national parks. Finally, you end at the warm coastal region.

#### **Highlights:**

- **Hike at the foothills of a snow capped volcano**
- **Visit Baños, the entrance of the Amazon**
- **Travel along the avenue of Volcanoes**
- **Experience 3 National parks in the highlands**
- **Taste local food**
- **Stay in comfortable small hotels and colonial hacienda`s**

#### **Included are:**

- Private transportation
- Licensed English speaking guide
- Accommodation based on double rooms
- Meals according to the itinerary  
(B = breakfast, L = lunch or box lunch, D = dinner)
- Permits and entrance fees
- Costs guide and driver
- Re-fill water bottle
- All measures for bio security
- First aid kit

#### **Not included:**

- Beverages
- Single supplement
- Personal equipment
- Not mentioned meals
- Eventually tips
- Travel insurance

**Brief overview:**

**Day 1.** Discover the historic center of Quito and learn about its pre Inca and colonial period. Local life, gold decorated churches, viewpoints and chocolate tasting is part of your experience today.

**Day 2.** Drive to and visit the Cotopaxi National Park

**Day 3.** Visit a local market and drive to Baños. Afternoon visit Baños

**Day 4.** Drive to Chimborazo Nature Reserve and visit the highest snowcapped volcano of Ecuador.

**Day 5.** Drive to the best Inca Ruins of Ecuador, named Ingapirca and continue to Cuenca

**Day 6.** Enjoy a half day sightseeing in Cuenca. Overnight in Cuenca

**Day 7.** Drive toward the warm coastal area and visit Cajas National Park on your way. Overnight in Guayaquil.

**Day 8.** Transfer to the airport and fly home or extend your stay in Ecuador or a close by country

**Itinerary:**

**Day 01.** Today we will explore the colonial city of Quito which has been acknowledged as a cultural heritage of mankind. The old centre boasts an impressive baroque, renacentist and neoclassical architecture, especially in the beautifully ornamented churches. Our exploration will bring us to the top hill of Panecillo which was in pre-Columbian times probably a sacred and ritual place. We will also observe the daily life of people and visit one of the small chocolate shops where we can learn the process of elaboration of this delicious Ecuadorian product.

**Day 2.** Our journey today heads up to Cotopaxi National Park. Cotopaxi 5.897 m. is one of the nicest snow-capped cone shaped volcanoes in the world, moreover, is the third highest active volcano in the world after volcano Ojos del Salado in Argentina and volcano Guallatire in Chile. We will admire the high plateau with its amazing variety of native plants and flowers and walk around the Limpiopungo lake where it is possible to observe many bird species such as caracara, Andean gull, sandpipers, giggles, and with some luck the Andean condor, among others.

**Day 3.** Today we will visit a colourful local market and observe the way locals sell and barter their products, in the afternoon we will head further south toward Ambato, on the way we will observe the green deep nestled lake Yambo, a lake of

tectonic origin. Our journey pursues down to the valley of Chambo and Patate rivers, on the way if weather permits we can observe the amazing shaped cone of Tungurahua volcano, finally we will arrive at Baños, a nice and peaceful place.

**Day 4.** Today we will continue to Chimborazo National Park. Chimborazo 6. 268 m. is the highest volcano in Ecuador. At the beginning of the XIX century it was considered the highest volcano in the world. Alexander von Humboldt in the year 1802 tried to climb it and reached an altitude of 5800 m. Edward Whymper was the first European to reach the top in the year 1880. In the park we will observe lots of vicuña roaming on the paramo. Hike toward the Whymper hut at 5000 m.

**Day 5.** Drive toward the southern province of Cañar, on the way we will observe the Colta lake, place where the first Spanish settlement was founded by Diego de Almagro. The Balbanera church is indeed the most ancient building in Ecuador. After passing el Tambo village we will arrive at Ingapirca and visit the best preserved Inca archaeological place in Ecuador as well as its surroundings and museum. Drive toward Cuenca.

**Day 6.** We will have a have day sightseeing in this beautiful city which boasts both colonial and republican architecture. The most significant icons are the old and new cathedral of Cuenca and the Tomebamba river which crosses the city. We will also visit the hill El Turi to get a panoramic view of the city and of course the Panama hut factory. Overnight in Cuenca.

**Day 7.** Today we will drive over El Cajas National Park toward the great plains of Guayaquil. We will stop at el Cajas at 3.800 m and undertake a hike in order to observe the native flora and birds, especially the giant hummingbird. El Cajas is a great lucustrian area with around 270 lakes and ponds. We will pursue our journey down to the coast driving through cloud forest and cacao and banana plantations. Overnight in Guayaquil.

**Day 8.** Transfer to the airport and fly home or extend your stay in Ecuador.