

Active Ecuador

8 days

Embark on an extraordinary off-the-beaten-path adventure through Ecuador's Andes and Amazon regions.

Biking

Kayaking

Swimming

Trekking

Hiking

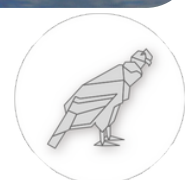
Canyoning

Cooking Class

Culture

Wildlife

Beer tasting



Active Ecuador

This journey offers the chance to explore volcanoes and jungles through thrilling activities like hiking, cycling, canyoning, and kayaking. You'll enjoy authentic farm-to-table meals, contribute to local communities (including a jungle school project), and witness incredible wildlife. All activities are led by professional guides and utilize quality equipment, ensuring a safe and enriching experience that connects you deeply with Ecuador's nature and culture.

Activity level : Easy to Moderated

Season: Year Around

Minumum age: 8 years old

8 days



Highlights

Cultural Highlights:

- **Quito City Exploration:** Free time to explore Quito's historic streets and local markets (optional guided tour available).
- **Andean Hacienda Experience:** Staying at a working organic farm and meeting alpacas and llamas.
- **Local Artisan Market:** Browse and shopping for tapestries and paintings at the artisan market near Quilotoa.
- **Baños Nightlife & Local Brewery:** Experiencing the vibrant evening atmosphere of Baños, including a local beer tasting.
- **Shamanic Encounter:** A visit from a local shaman to share insights into jungle spiritual practices and medicinal traditions.
- **Local School & Community Visit:** Kayaking to and interacting with a local Amazonian school and community, including supporting a computer center project.
- **Amazonian Traditional Lunch:** Enjoying a traditional lunch prepared by a local family in Llanganates National Park.
- **Hands-on Cooking Class:** Learning to prepare traditional dinner and chocolate fondue in the Amazon.

Adventure Highlights:

- **Quilotoa Volcano Trek & Kayaking:** Hiking down into the Quilotoa caldera and having the option to kayak on the lagoon.
- **Cotopaxi Volcano Bike:** Biking the great views of the Cotopaxi National Park.
- **Baños Hot Springs Soak:** Unwinding and relaxing in the therapeutic volcanic hot springs of Baños.
- **Cloud Forest Biking:** Enjoying a mostly downhill bike ride through the lush cloud forest of Llanganates National Park.
- **"Swing at the End of the World" & Tarabita:** Visiting the famous swing and riding the thrilling Tarabita cable car (with optional zip-lining).
- **Amazon River Kayaking:** Paddling a calm Class I section of the Arajuno River, perfect for beginners.
- **Pailon del Diablo Waterfall Hike:** Exploring the breathtaking Pailon del Diablo Waterfall with a forest hike.

- **Canyoning through the Jungle:** An exciting activity into the sacred waterfalls of the Llanganates.

Eco-Friendly Accommodations: Stay in carefully selected properties that prioritize sustainability and blend seamlessly into their natural surroundings, offering breathtaking views and an intimate connection with nature.

Arrival in Quito & Welcome Briefing

Day 1

Welcome to Ecuador! Upon your arrival at Mariscal Sucre International Airport (UIO), we'll be waiting to transfer you to your hotel in Quito, a scenic 45-minute drive.

This first day is yours to settle in and explore the vibrant city of Quito at your own pace. Wander through its historic streets, discover local markets, or simply relax at the hotel. If you're eager for a deeper dive, we can arrange an optional guided city tour with one of our expert local guides (at an additional cost). Just let us know!

In the evening, please join us for an important group meeting at 6:00 PM in the hotel lobby. Here, you'll meet your expedition guide and fellow travelers, get acquainted, and receive a comprehensive briefing on the exciting days ahead.

Overnight: Swissotel or similar

Meals: None





Quilotoa Volcano Trek & Andean Hacienda Experience

Day 2

Today, we embark on an unforgettable journey south from Quito along the Pan-American Highway, famously known as the "Avenue of the Volcanoes," a name bestowed by Alexander von Humboldt in the early 1800s. Our scenic 3.5-hour drive offers breathtaking views of the Andean peaks before we reach the majestic Quilotoa Volcano.

We'll hike down into the caldera to the stunning Quilotoa Lagoon, a turquoise jewel nestled within the crater. The descent offers incredible photo opportunities of this natural wonder. Once at the bottom, you'll have the option to kayak on the serene waters of the lagoon. The challenging ascent back up from the crater, at an elevation of approximately 13,000 feet, is rewarding.

After our trek, we'll enjoy a traditional Ecuadorian lunch at a local restaurant. You'll also have time to browse the local artisan market, renowned for its beautiful tapestries and paintings. Later, we'll drive to our charming Andean hacienda, a working organic farm where you can meet friendly alpacas and llamas.

Overnight: Family Working Farm – Andean Hacienda

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch



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Cotopaxi Volcano

Biking & Baños Hot Springs

Day 3

After a wholesome breakfast, we'll take a short 10-minute drive to the entrance of Cotopaxi National Park. Cotopaxi Volcano, with its perfect conical shape and snow-capped summit at 19,347 feet, is an iconic symbol of Ecuador. Upon arrival, enjoy a warm cup of coca tea, a traditional remedy to ease the effects of altitude, as you take in the stunning vistas of the park.

We are ready to set off on a thrilling bike ride along dirt and grass tracks, navigating diverse terrains surrounded by volcanic material from Cotopaxi's last eruption. This ride offers opportunities to spot local fauna, including bulls, horses, foxes, and the majestic Andean condor. The mostly flat route is accessible for various skill levels and takes us past ancient ruins, where your guide will share insightful stories about the region's history.

We'll return to our vehicle and enjoy lunch before heading to the vibrant town of Baños de Agua Santa. After checking into our hotel, we'll unwind and soak in the therapeutic volcanic hot springs, a perfect way to relax after our high-altitude adventure.

Overnight: Family Run – Boutique Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch





Biking into the Cloud

Forest & Baños

Delights

Day 4

Today, we'll dive into the lush cloud forest ecosystem surrounding Baños. A 45-minute drive takes us to Llanganates National Park, where our biking adventure begins at 10,000 feet. After a short uphill warm-up, we'll enjoy a mostly downhill ride to 5,000 feet.

As we cycle, you'll be immersed in the incredible biodiversity of the cloud forest, admiring diverse flora and fauna, and passing by local farms growing exotic fruits like tree tomatoes and passion fruit. The ride is primarily on a paved road with light traffic.

Once we complete our ride, we'll enjoy a refreshing picnic lunch. Our afternoon includes a visit to the famous "Swing at the End of the World," a National Geographic award-winning photo spot, and a ride on the thrilling Tarabita cable car across a gorge (with an optional zip-lining experience available). In the evening, we'll return to our hotel and then head out to experience Baños' vibrant nightlife, perhaps with a local beer tasting at a brewery.

Overnight: Family Run – Boutique Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch





Amazon Kayak Adventure & Shamanic Encounter

Day 5

Get ready for an early start as we journey into the heart of the Amazon basin! Our first stop is the breathtaking Pailon del Diablo Waterfall, a natural wonder we'll explore with a one-hour round-trip hike through the forest.

Afterward, a scenic 2.5-hour drive takes us deeper into the jungle. Upon arrival at the Arajuno River, we'll enjoy a welcome picnic and a thorough safety briefing on our kayaking equipment and techniques. The Arajuno River is a calm Class I river, perfect for beginners—no prior kayaking experience is necessary as our expert guides will provide all the instruction you need for a smooth and enjoyable paddle. As we glide along the river, you'll be mesmerized by the Amazon rainforest's incredible biodiversity and spot many colorful bird species along the shoreline.

After approximately two hours of paddling, we'll arrive at our serene riverside glamping site. Enjoy a refreshing drink upon check-in before a delicious traditional dinner is served. In the evening, a local shaman will visit our camp to share insights into the spiritual practices and medicinal traditions of the jungle, offering a truly unforgettable cultural experience.

Overnight: Arajuno River Amazon Glamping

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



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Wildlife, Culture, Canyoning & Amazonian Delights

Day 6

Our day begins with an early morning canoe ride to a clay lick, where parrots gather daily to consume vital minerals that help detoxify their diet—an incredible encounter with nature! After this spectacle, we'll return to camp for breakfast.

Later, we'll kayak to a local school and community to learn more about their culture and traditions. You might even participate in games with the local children, including soccer. We're proud to have established a computer center at this school, empowering children with technology and a stronger voice to protect their territory from mining and deforestation. Your visit directly supports this vital project.

We'll continue kayaking down the river for another two hours on calm waters. After our kayaking adventure, we'll transfer to a Wildlife Sanctuary, where we'll explore by canoe and on foot to observe monkeys and colorful birds. Our journey continues to Llanganates National Park, where a local family will welcome us with a traditional lunch. In the afternoon, we'll embark on an educational hike to learn about the Amazon's medicinal plants, and a canyoning adventure where we will be walking along a shallow river and climbing some small waterfalls with ropes. The late afternoon features a hands-on cooking class where we'll prepare our traditional dinner and even make delicious chocolate fondue!

Overnight: Amazon Homestay

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



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Natural Lagoons & Farewell Dinner

Day 7

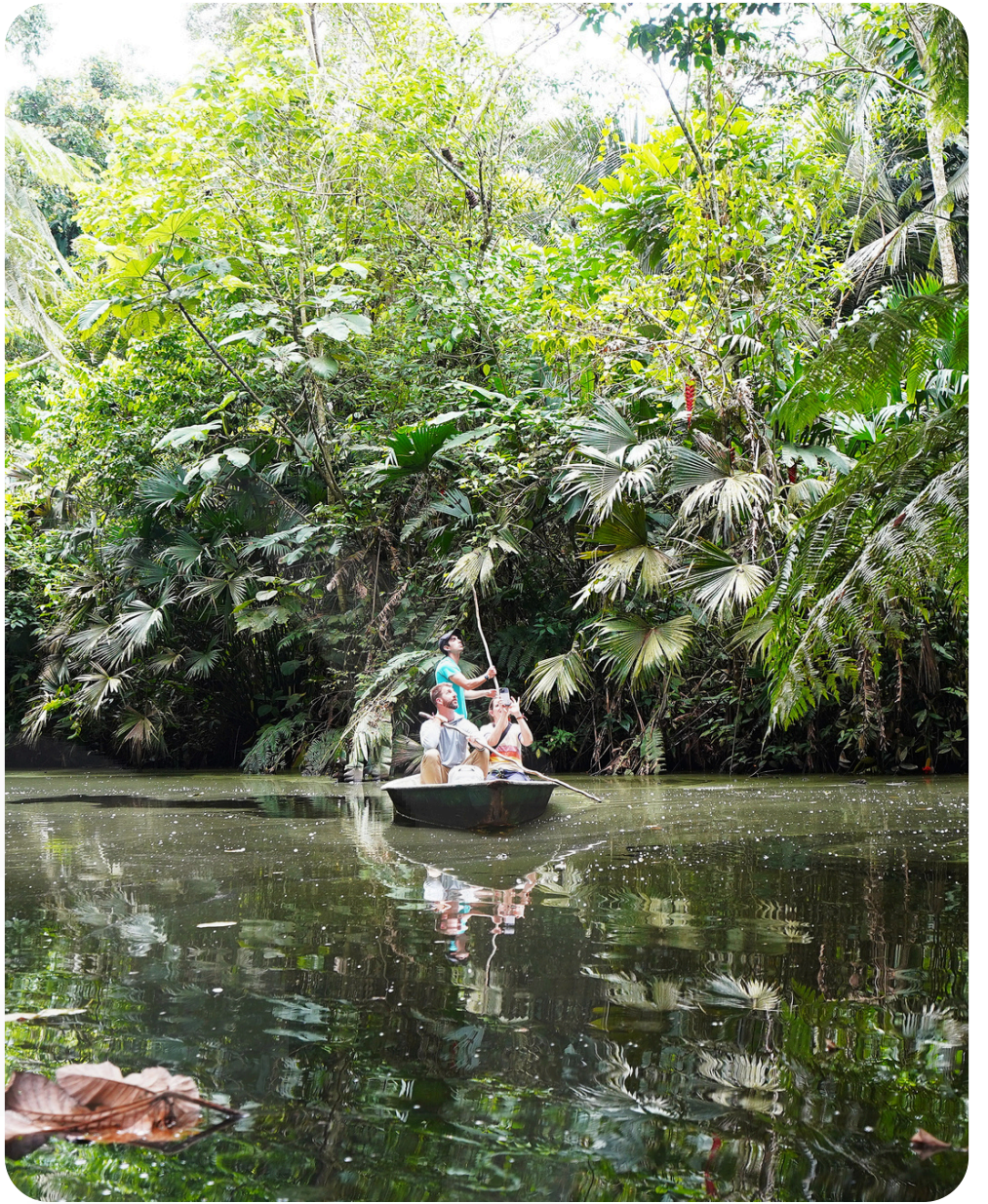
After breakfast, we'll visit a Natural Lagoons Reserve, where you'll have the opportunity to swim and relax in these pristine waters. We'll enjoy lunch here. For those seeking more adventure, an optional Class III rafting trip is available (at extra cost).

In the afternoon, we'll begin our journey back to Quito, arriving around 6:00 PM. After a short break to freshen up, we'll gather for a special farewell dinner, reminiscing about our incredible Ecuadorian expedition.

Overnight: Swissotel or similar

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner





Departure Day

Day 8

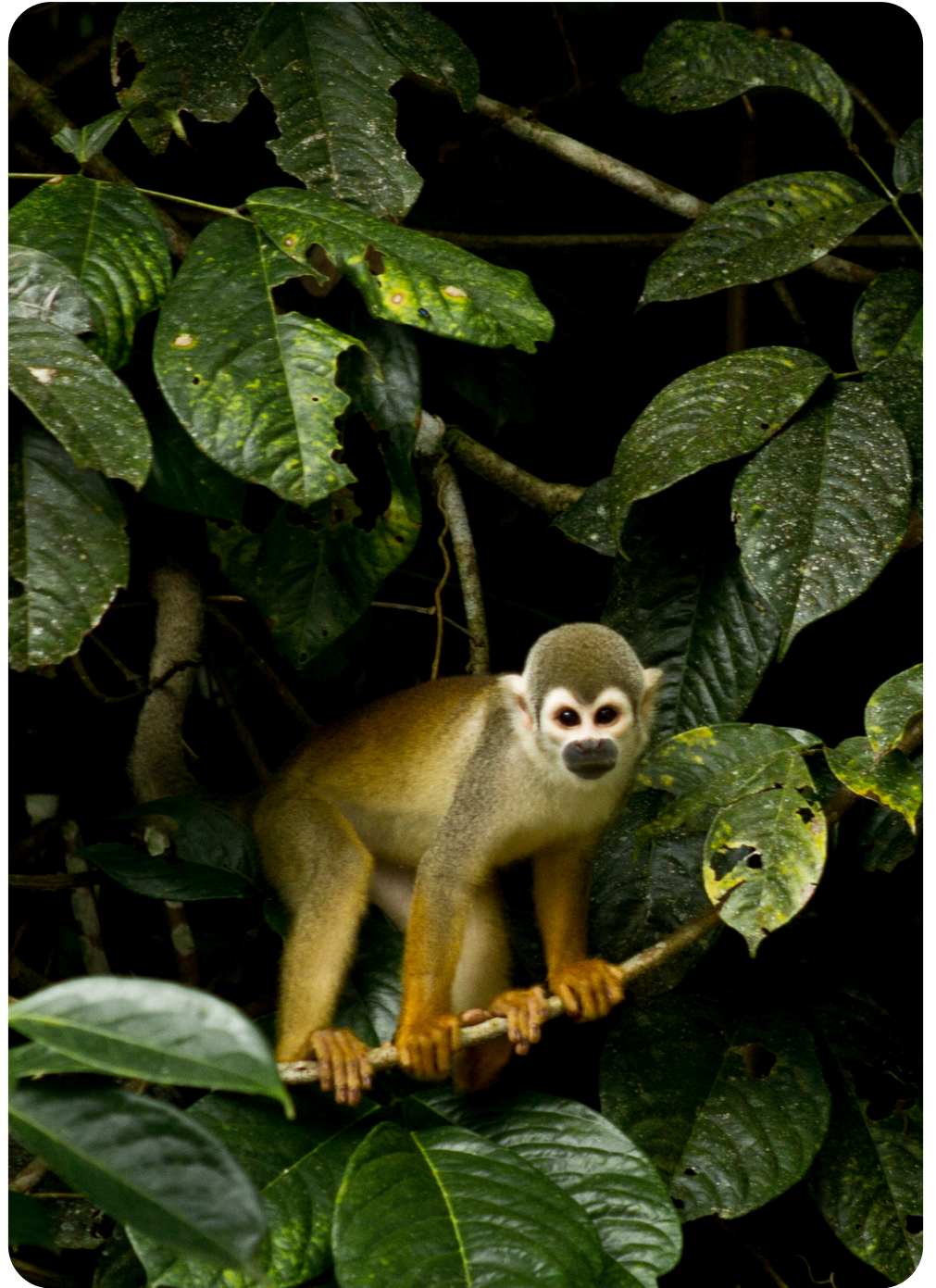
As our incredible journey comes to an end, we'll arrange your airport transfer based on your individual flight schedule. To ensure a smooth departure, we recommend scheduling your pick-up at least three hours prior to your flight's departure time.

Meals included: Breakfast



Included

- Airport transfers
- Top-experienced, certified English-speaking guides
- All land and water transport as per itinerary
- Seven nights accommodation
- Meals as specified in the itinerary
- Water and snacks provided at all times
- Quality biking gear, including gloves and helmets
- Quality kayaking gear, Amazon: Expedition-grade inflatable kayaks, lifejackets and paddles
- Canyoning gear, Black diamond harnesses, helmets, ropes and rubber boots
- Trekking poles
- Fees to National Parks and reserves



Exclusions

- International or domestic flights
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Tips for guides and drivers
- Travel insurance (mandatory)
- Optional activities: Rafting (\$75 USD per person)



Packing list

General Packing Strategy: Prioritize quick-drying fabrics, protection from sun and insects, and sturdy footwear. Pack light and use packing cubes for organization. Remember that the weather can change, and versatility is key.

General Packing List:

Clothing:

- Outerwear: Waterproof & windproof jacket and pants (rain gear), warm fleece or down jacket.
- Tops: Moisture-wicking long and short-sleeved shirts.
- Bottoms: Comfortable hiking pants (convertible ideal), light pants/shorts, swimsuit.
- Warmth: Warm hat, gloves, warm hiking socks.
- Casual Wear: For evenings and travel days.
- Amazon Specific: Lightweight, long-sleeved shirts and pants (light colors, quick-drying) for insect/sun protection.

Footwear:

- Hiking: Sturdy, broken-in, waterproof hiking boots with ankle support.
- Casual: Comfortable walking shoes/sneakers, sandals/flip-flops.
- Water Activities: Water shoes (optional, but good for kayaking/river).

Gear & Equipment:

- Daypack (20-30L): For daily excursions.
- Hydration: Water bottle or hydration bladder.
- Light: Headlamp/flashlight.
- Sun Protection: Sunglasses, sun hat/cap.
- Protection: Dry bags/waterproof sacks for electronics.
- Trekking Poles: (Provided, but bring your own if preferred).
- Binoculars: Highly recommended for spotting birds, marine life, and other animals from a distance.



Packing list

Health & Safety:

- Medications: Personal prescriptions, basic first-aid kit.
- Protection: Insect repellent (with DEET/picaridin), high-SPF sunscreen, lip balm with SPF.
- Hygiene: Hand sanitizer.
- Consult Doctor: For altitude sickness medication and vaccinations.

Toiletries & Personal Items:

- Standard toiletries (consider biodegradable for Amazon), small quick-drying towel, wet wipes.

Documents & Money:

- Essentials: Passport (6+ months validity) & copies, travel insurance info (mandatory), flight details.
- Financial: Credit/debit cards (notify bank), USD cash (small denominations), money belt.

Electronics (Optional):

- Camera, power bank, phone & charger.

Miscellaneous:

- Small souvenir bag, book/e-reader, energy snacks, reusable shopping bag, Ziploc bags.

By packing smart and light, you'll be well-prepared to fully enjoy this incredible adventure without the hassle of extra baggage fees.

NOTE: Laundry is available almost at every location, this helps traveling light too.



Important Information

- **Itinerary Disclaimer:** Even though we have a detailed itinerary, changes can be made by your guides, due to weather or safety reasons. Please also note that none of the wildlife sightings mentioned on the itinerary are guaranteed.
- **Visas and Passports:** Make sure you check your visa and passport validity and requirements per country. It is important your passport is valid for at least 6 months before your travel.
- **Accommodation:** We strive to use small and charming places that are unique and provide stellar service.
- **Single Supplement Costs:** Generally, apply to solo travelers who do not have a roommate to share accommodation with.
- **Transportation:** Driving time can take more than expected in Ecuador, as it is a small country with roads meandering through the Andes mountains. We assure your comfort during transit no matter the size of the group.
- **Gear:** We always make sure our guests have top of the line gear from well-known and reputable international brands as we understand that the best gear gives extra confidence to our travelers.
- **Level of Activity:** This trip is considered as 3 out of 5. No prior experience is required and your guides will always brief you about safety and proper use of gear on every leg of the trip. Biking and trekking will take place on varying terrain of dirt and rock; canyoning you can expect hiking on water and rocks, and also climbing into some small waterfalls, the kayaking is on calm waters with small fun rapids. There will be a transport support for the majority of the activities in the case that someone wants to take a break or just wants to relax.



Important Information

- **Weather and Elevation:** In Ecuador the weather can be vary greatly depending on which side of the Andes you are traveling to, so it is highly recommended to come ready for all kinds of weather. When they say “Ecuador, All in One Place” they mean it! The altitude determines the temperature and the higher you go the colder it gets. Don’t let the geographic location of the country fool you. Even at a mere 15,000 feet the temperatures can feel like those of a winter in the northern United States. The coastal lowlands in the western part of Ecuador are typically warm with temperatures in the region of 25 °C (77 °F). Coastal areas are affected by ocean currents and between January and April are hot and rainy. The weather in Quito is consistent with that of a subtropical highland climate. The average temperature during the day is 70 °F (21 °C), which generally falls to an average of 50 °F (10 °C) at night. The average temperature annually is 64°F (17.8°C). There are only really two seasons in the city: dry and wet. The dry season runs from June to September and the wet season is from October to May.
- **Sustainability:** We do our best to not produce any trash; we believe that recycling is not enough so we try to avoid using any plastic or materials that pollute our environment. Every day we work towards being a zero-waste tour operator and our staff is well trained to leave the least impact possible in our service areas. We also work with local indigenous communities in the different regions. By doing so we are able to teach our guests about the rich culture Ecuador, all the while helping the people preserve their traditions and lands. By working directly with local peoples, we are able to create a sustainable touristic income for the community.



Important Information

- **Guides:** All our guides have a professional background from the Tourism University; this means they have a degree in guiding, so their knowledge and skills when leading a group are top-notch. Each guide has many years of experience and they all have taken additional courses for other outdoor activities as well as have International First-Aid certifications. On top of all of this, they are all extremely personable and strive to deliver travel experiences of a lifetime.
- **Health advices:** No vaccinations needed for this trip.

