



**ANDANDO<sup>o</sup>**  
**TOURS**

Mainland Ecuador &  
Galápagos Islands

# From The Pacific to The Andes

8-day tour





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## Day 1

Upon your arrival to the city of Guayaquil in Ecuador, our personnel will be waiting for you to welcome you and guide you to our transport for a short transfer to the exclusive Hotel del Parque, located in Guayaquil's historical park Parque Histórico amid green gardens and historic houses. After our check-in, we will enjoy dinner at the Hotel hotel and have a good night's rest.

## Day 2

After breakfast, we will have a short drive to the heart of Guayaquil for a tour of the most iconic places in the biggest largest city and main port of the country. We will walk in on the Malecon 2000 Simón Bolívar, a long pier boardwalk at along the edge of the impressive Guayas River, which encloses and some of the city's historical monuments of the city and . It is also located beside near the neighborhood of Las Peñas, one of the first to be built in Guayaquil and now populated by artists and galleries that occupy the historic houses.







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After this visit, we will have lunch at a local restaurant to then leave Guayaquil behind and to begin our ascent to the Andean region. This ride is fascinating, as we will witness how the landscape smoothly quickly changes as we leave the plantations of the coast behind and begin to gain altitude. Our first visit in the highlands will be to Cajas National Park, one of the biggest largest wetland reserves in Ecuador and covering an extension of 30,000 H hectares of forest and moorland with more than 230 lakes spread across the protected area.

Because of the different altitudes and humidity on this irregular terrain, this reserve has many different microclimates and ecosystems, making for an ideal home for many animals, especially birds and amphibians. The rugged landscapes of El Cajas are interspersed with many interesting geological formations, which give way to small forests of Polylepis (an intriguing tree found only in the Andes), which is also home to many orchids and mosses that hide in the twisted trunks and branches of the trees. After a walk and visit to this natural treasure, we will continue to Cuenca, where we will check in at to the colonial h Hotel Victoria to enjoy dinner and spend the night.





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## Day 3

After breakfast at the H hotel, we will spend the day in Cuenca's historical center. The beauty and colonial ambiance of Cuenca are best experienced on foot. Our tour weaves its way through the old town center, designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, and includes visits to the Old and New Cathedrals, the famed local flower market and a stop at a famous Panama hat workshop.

We will have lunch at a local typical restaurant to taste the local cuisine before leaving the city towards for the Cañar province to the north, where we will visit Ingapirca, Ecuador's most famous archaeological complex. The ruins of Ingapirca, as they are also known, are constructions constructed of perfectly carved stones that fit together seamlessly and the main ruin is the elliptic structure of the Temple of the Sun. This temple was used for the ceremonies and rituals of the Cañari and Inca cultures. Additionally, among the remaining buildings, we find a cemetery, a solar observatory, paths, priests' chambers and an indigenous plaza. As the afternoon ends, we will leave the complex and check in at Posada Ingapirca, a 200-year-old H hacienda adapted for tourism and located 300 meters from the complex. Here we will have dinner and enjoy a good night's rest in the peaceful town.







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## Day 4

After a delicious Highland highlands breakfast, we will travel to Alausí where our train adventure on the “Nariz del Diablo” (The Devil’s Nose) ‘begins. The ‘Devils Devil’s Nose’ as it is known, is an unforgettable train ride down an incredibly steep mountain pass; the train makes zig-zags to make hairpin turns all the way down the mountain and then back up again. After this activity, we will have lunch at a local nearby restaurant and then continue our journey to the Chimborazo Natural Nature rReserve. Chimborazo is the highest volcano in Ecuador and the nearest closest point to the sun on our planet, towering to at an altitude of 6,310 meters (20,702 feet) above sea level. This volcano has a crater of that is 20 kilometers in diameter and was considered one of the most powerful deities by the indigenous nations that inhabit the area. However, the The glaciers of Chimborazo and the native bush-like forests (Andean high forests) of its lower slopes provides water to three provinces of Ecuador through rivers and underground springs. The reserve’s primary purpose is to recover the fauna and flora of the area and has a large population of vicuñas and alpacas, which were reintroduced in the Area to the region in the 1990’s 1990s. The flora of this ecosystem known locally as “Paramo” páramo (which translates to moorland) is unique and has adapted to extreme weather conditions and abrupt changes in temperature, since we can have it can be 25 degrees C° in the morning and - 5 degrees C° that same night. Plants have different ways to adapt to this: some grow fur (yes, actual fur) on the leaves to avoid the freezing droplets to touch touching the leaves, others have wooden flowers so that the amount of water content on the petals is so low that they cannot freeze, to name a few examples.







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After our visit to the reserve, we will head to the city of Riobamba, for a well-earned dinner and to spend the night in at Abraspungo, a charming Andean H hacienda with spectacular views of the neighboring volcanoes.

## Day 5

We will enjoy an early breakfast to and then make our way to Baños, known as the gateway to the Amazon, because of its privileged location on the eastern slopes of the Andes that descend to the rainforest. While in Baños, we will visit the cathedral and central square, which is usually bustling with people and colorful offers of food, candy, toys and many other things. Afterwards, we leave the cathedral behind as we start our drive to the route of the waterfalls. From Baños, we will turn head down towards the jungle to see the many waterfalls that go into the Pastaza River gorge, which is around 300 meters deep. We will stop in at the most famous waterfalls before reaching our destination in the Parroquia Rio Verde. Here we will walk for around 15 minutes on a path that crosses the cloud forest and ends in at one of the most amazing wonders of nature: El Pailon del Diablo” (the devil’s cauldron). The Pailon is a huge waterfall that falls in on a big cauldron of rocks, which has been formed by the force of the water falling on the rocks. For the more adventurous, there is a small tunnel carved on in the rock that lets you reach the back of the waterfall, but this is a wet adventure because of spraying water





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Afterwards, we walk back to our transport vehicle to return to Baños, where we will enjoy a late lunch at a local restaurant and rest a bit after our adventure. Then, there will be some free time to explore this beautiful town on your own before returning to the H hotel for dinner and to spend the night.

## Day 6

After breakfast, we will leave Baños behind and travel north, to the province of Cotopaxi, named after the most famous volcano in Ecuador. Cotopaxi, at 5,898 m. above sea level, is one of the highest active volcanoes in the world and easily the most visited summit in Ecuador due to its easy access for amateur climbers and experts alike. Our drive through this the Cotopaxi National Park brings us out onto the plains of Laguna de Limpiopungo, a lake fed by water from the Rumiñahui volcano, which towers over it.







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It is thought that the Incan Rumiñahui hid his gold on the mountain and many search parties have set out to find it, some never to be seen again. The park's wildlife gathers at the water's edge, where you can easily see ducks, swallows, frogs, and toads, and you may spot an eagle or maybe a great Andean Condor. If the sky is clear, we can catch beautiful views of Cotopaxi and the surrounding volcanoes: Rumiñahui, Sincholagua, Pasachoa, and, - with luck, - the elusive Antisana.

After this visit, we will head for to Hacienda La Alegría to enjoy lunch and prepare for the afternoon activity: a "Chagra style" horseback ride in the beautiful and unique surrounding landscape. Hacienda La Alegría specializes in this activity, ensuring a pleasant an exciting adventure.

After our ride, we will return to the Hhacienda for dinner and rest for the night.







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## Day 7

After a highland breakfast at Hacienda La Alegria, we will head towards Quito, the capital of Ecuador and the first city in the world to be declared World Cultural Heritage Site by the Unesco UNESCO. We will step back in time into the picturesque neighborhood of San Juan as we make our way toward the Historic Center. We will walk down quaint cobbled streets lined with brightly colored colonial houses roofed in with antique tiles roofs, with and flower-dressed balconies dressed, watched over by the Quito's winged Virgin Mary of standing on the 'Panecillo.' The 'Panecillo,' so named for its bread-like shape, is a parasitic crater formed by magma from Pichincha Volcano. From here we continue along Benalcázar Street, past the house of conquistador Sebastian de Benalcázar and onto García Moreno Street.

This street, also known as the Calle de las Siete Cruces (Street of the Seven Crosses), was originally an Incan route to the Panecillo, a hill thought to have been a center of worship to the sun and moon gods. This Incan avenue was transformed into the most Catholic influenced street in Quito when the Spanish arrived. They erected seven crosses along the street to make the indigenous people believe in their God. We will walk along this street to the Plaza de la Independencia (Independence Square).





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On the south side of the square lie is one of the oldest cathedrals in South America and the sacred heart of the city: La Catedral de Quito, an impressive white-walled building with green glazed ceramic domes. Look out for the plaque marking the spot on which President Gabriel Garcia Moreno was killed. The symmetrical Palacio de Carondelet, the presidential palace, runs along the western side of the square, its overhanging balconies a gift from the French Government and originally from the Tuileries Palace in Paris. A few buildings up, is the incomparable Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús, a Jesuit church overflowing with Baroque art, its tragic history covered in gold concealing the devastating fire and earthquake that shook it. The great Plaza de San Francisco and its church have been a center of activity since pre-Incan times when the square was the Ttianguuez (primary marketplace). We will search for the mythical stone from the legend of Cantuña in the church's vestibule and visit the museum which houses four thousand pieces including sculptures and oil paintings from the Escuela Quiteña (Quito School), an artistic tradition that emerged during Ecuador's colonial period. The works of art on display by artists such as Miguel de Santiago, Miguel Chili,- better known as 'Caspicara' - and Bernardo de Legarda show the mix of indigenous and European styles: angels with Andean features and virgins dressed in wide skirts shaped like volcanoes. Following this excursion, we depart from Quito for the Mitad del Mundo (Middle of the World) complex, with a stop for lunch at a lovely restaurant specializing in typical Ecuadorian cuisine.







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In the middle of the world, a 30-meter-high monument is located at latitude 0° 0' 0", and gives you the unusual opportunity of standing in both the northern and southern hemispheres at the same time while straddling the equator. To one side of the monument, a replica of a Spanish Colonial village offers a leisure area, gift shops, and restaurants. This site was highly significant for the ancient Andean people whose cosmovision worshipped the unity of cosmos, nature, and family many thousands of years ago. We will also visit the Intiñan mMuseum, dedicated to the promotion and study of the nations that inhabited the equatorial area of South America. The museum also has several attractions, such as a totem forest, sundials, an example of a Shuar home, and much more. After this, we return to the hotel for a hearty dinner and to spend the night.

## Day 8

After breakfast, we will drive to the airport or on to your next adventure in Ecuador.

