



Cultural Adventures Tours for the Young-at-Heart

Amazing Ecuador: Andes & Amazon Rainforest Escorted Trip Sept 15 – Sept 26, 2016

Cultural Adventures tours offer you the opportunity to learn about both the Andes and Amazon rain forest as part of a small group. You'll enjoy select experiences away from the usual tourist sights during a visit that combines soft adventure with maximum comfort. Not only will you experience two diverse ecosystems of Ecuador, you will meet local people and learn about the culture. When you take a *Cultural Adventures* trip you are supporting local people who provide information and services.

- * Designed for travelers who want an active trip in two very diverse ecosystems: the Andes mountains and the Amazon rainforest
- * Travel with an escort who will provide valuable information and travel tips before and during the trip
- * Group size is limited to 10 or less

Highlights:

- Spend a day in the old town of Quito and at the Middle of the Earth (equator)
- Explore the Amazon rainforest for five days while staying at a comfortable eco-lodge
- Ride the Devil's Nose train for spectacular views of the Andes
- Discover Cuenca, the city of the artists and a UNESCO Historical site

Trip Fee: \$3595 per double occupancy. Single supplement available.

Included: All hotels, local flights, motorized canoe to the jungle, land transportation, tours, airport transfers, escort, guides & 27 meals.

Not included: International flight to Ecuador, National Park fee of \$10, tips and personal expenses

Itinerary:

Day One - Sep 15- Arrive Quito on your own. You'll be met at the airport and escorted to our hotel.

Day Two – Five - Sep 16, 17, 18, 19- Amazon Rainforest – Our visit to the rainforest begins today. Traveling to our comfortable eco-lodge is an adventure in itself. First we take a short flight from Quito to Coca where we hop on a motorized canoe for a ride of 2+ hours through the jungle. The Yasuní National Park is one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world. Daily activities are based on interest and will include hiking in the jungle, canoe rides, swimming, a visit to an indigenous family, canopy tower visits, relaxing in a hammock, and taking night hikes. In the evening you might take a canoe or walking trip to view nocturnal rainforest animals such as caiman, monkeys, insects and owls. Amazon Eco-Lodge (B, L, D)

Day Six - Sep 20 – Return to Quito via motorized canoe and a short flight. We'll overnight at a hacienda. Once we arrive at our hacienda you can hike, explore the area or just relax. (B, L, D)

Day Seven - Sep 21 – Cotopaxi Hacienda – Today we ride through the "Avenue of the Volcanoes." Two Andean mountain ranges run parallel across Ecuador from north to south, offering varied and always spectacular topography: volcanoes and snow capped mountains, green valleys with impressive Colonial cities, quaint Indian villages, farmlands, haciendas, lakes and rivers of crystal blue waters. Lunch will be at a hacienda in the very heart of breathtaking landscapes.. (B, L, D)

Day Eight- Sep 22 – Guamote Market – We'll drive south to Guamote for a visit to the most authentic indigenous market in the country. This is not a tourist market but a local Ecuadorian market where the indigenous people wear their traditional clothing. There's even an animal market to explore. In the afternoon we'll continue our journey to Alausi where we'll spend the night. (B, L)

Day Nine - Sep 23- Devil's Nose train & Ingapirca – The day begins with a ride on the Devil's Nose, renowned as “the most difficult train in the world,” a famous portion of the Ecuadorian railway. In order to traverse an almost perpendicular mountain face, railway engineers decided to build an ingenious zig-zag track where the train descends backwards for over 2 Km. Once back in Alausí, our trip continues south along the gorgeous Pan-American Highway with a stop at Ingapirca, the main Inca complex in Ecuador. We'll then continue to Cuenca for a late afternoon arrival. (B, L)

Day Ten – Sep 24- Cuenca City Tour - Our walking tour of the Old Town takes us through magnificent churches, beautiful old buildings with wrought iron balconies and carved wooden doors, flower and handicrafts markets, and art galleries. We'll also visit a Panama hat factory and an artist's studio. The remainder of the day is free for you to explore the city on your own. (B, L)

Day Eleven - Sep 25- Culture & Food tour in Gualaceo & Craft Making Villages - Discover colorful villages located near Cuenca where skilled artisans work wonders. En route you will have the chance to taste the local gastronomy of the Andes. Make sure you set out with a hearty appetite! (B, L)

Day Twelve – Sep 26 – You'll have the morning free to explore the museums and the old town in Cuenca on your own. We'll fly to Quito after lunch so you can take an evening flight home. Your flight home should be scheduled after 8 pm. (B)

An optional tour of Quito is available before this trip. Contact Connie for details.

Participant's Background Information:

- * US citizens do not need a visa to visit Ecuador.
- * The currency of Ecuador is the US dollar so there is no need to change money.
- * This is an active adventure. Because of the heat and humidity, an Amazon jungle tour requires a reasonable level of fitness. Participants must be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 2-5 hours of physical activity daily.
- * Basic travel insurance with medical evacuation coverage is mandatory – insurance to cover trip cancellation is highly recommended.
- * Deposit of \$750 will reserve your spot. Payment of the balance is due by June 15, 2016. Refunds, less \$75, will be returned upon written request until June 15, 2016. After this date, no refunds of any type will be made. Save \$100 on this trip by paying the balance by May 15, 2016.

If you are ready for a unique adventure, send in your deposit of \$750 to reserve your place. Write deposit checks to Cultural Adventures and mail to: Cultural Adventures, 129 Cranberry Lane, Centerville, MA 02632.

For more information go to www.culturaladventures.info or contact Connie Champlin at 317.908.1220