

Cultural Adventures Tours for the Young-at-Heart

Amazing Ecuador: Andes & Amazon Rainforest Escorted Trip June 2 – 12, 2017

Cultural Adventures tours offer you the opportunity to learn about both the Andes and Amazon Rainforest 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:

- Explore the Amazon Rainforest for four 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: \$2995 per double occupancy when payment is made by Jan 15, 2017. Trip cost after that date is \$3195. 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, and the Yasuní National Park fee of \$15, tips and personal expenses.

Early payment discount when you pay for the trip by January 15, 2017

Itinerary:

Day One – June 2 – Arrive Quito on your own. You'll be met at the airport and escorted to our hotel. Hosteria San Carlos or equivalent

Day Two – June 3, 4, 5 -- 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 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 Five – June 6 – Morning at the Eco Lodge - Return to Quito. Drive through the Andes to our hacienda where you can hike, explore the area or just relax before we gather for dinner. Hacienda La Cienega (B, L, D)

Day Six – June 7 – Avenue of the Volcanoes – 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 striking topography: volcanoes and snow-capped mountains, green valleys with impressive colonial cities, quaint Indian villages, farmlands, haciendas, lakes and rivers of crystal blue waters. The highlight of our day will be a stop at Quilotoa Crater, a water-filled 3km-wide caldera formed when the volcano collapsed during an eruption about 800 years ago spreading ash throughout the northern Ecuadorian Andes. It's a fabulous greenish color because of dissolved minerals. Those who wish may hike down to the crater while others may just choose to enjoy the spectacular views. Lunch will be at a hacienda in the very heart of breathtaking landscapes. Hacienda Abraspungo (B, L)

Day Seven - June 8 - Guamote Market & Devil's Nose train - Guamote is home to a fabulous highland market that attracts hundreds of indigenous locals from the surrounding *sierra*. We'll arrive early so you can explore the animal market too. Next we'll ride on the famous Devil's Nose train, renown as "the most difficult train in the world," and a highlight for train enthusiasts. Posada Ingapirca (B, L)

Day Eight - June 9 - Ingapirca - Located at the top of a hill with beautiful views of the surrounding countryside, Ingapirca is the most important Inca complex located in Ecuador. It was built during the Inca expansion into Ecuador at the end of the 15th century. The Temple of the Sun features stone walls constructed in the Inca way using massive blocks chiseled to fit together perfectly without the use of mortar. After lunch at the posada, we'll drive to Cuenca for an afternoon arrival. Hotel Victoria (B, L)

Day Nine - June 10 - Cuenca City Tour - On our Cuenca city tour you'll discover some of the main sights of the city including the New Cathedral, the famed local flower market and the Barranco with its historic houses perched on cliffs high above the rushing Tomebamba River. Next during a food and cooking tour, you'll explore the local market followed by a cooking class run by a professional chef who will teach you to cook a traditional Ecuadorian meal. This is a unique tour for foodies. After enjoying the meal you've prepared, the day will end with a visit to a Panama hat factory. Hotel Victoria (B, L)

Day Ten - June 11 - Culture and Food Tour to Gualaceo & Craft Making Villages - Ideal for food and culture lovers alike, this tour will take you to 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! Hotel Victoria (B, L)

Day Eleven - June 12- Cuenca - Morning free for last minute shopping or a visit to a museum. Return to Quito in the late afternoon.

An optional tour of Quito is available before this trip. Contact Connie at 317.908.1220 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. Cost of trip is \$2995 per double occupancy when payment made by Jan 15, 2017; Trip cost after that date is \$3195.
- * Refunds, less \$75, will be returned upon written request until Jan 16, 2017. After this date, no refunds of any type will be made.

For more information go to www.culturaladventures.info or contact Connie Champlin at 317-908-1220 - cchamp@culturaladventures.info