

A World Away Travels

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Ecuador's Islands, Mountains and Jungles

February 9-25, 2001

July 13-29, 2001

This tour combines Ecuador's many cultural and natural landscapes into one journey. Arriving in Quito our tour travels to the Ecuadorian Highlands to visit a land studded with snow-capped volcanoes and small mountain villages surrounded with endless lush rolling green hills. Based from a country hacienda we explore the mountain markets and witness the famous weaving of the Otavalo Indians. Next we fly over the Andes and enter the heart of the Amazon Jungle. Situated in a tropical river lagoon, the Sach Jungle Lodge is our base to explore the depths of the forest and its extraordinary animal and bird life. And no tour would be complete without including the famed Galápagos Islands. Aboard one of our chartered boats you will sail or cruise through a chain of Islands that have fascinated scientists since Darwin's remarkable discoveries. The finally to our trip to the many worlds of Ecuador. *moderate touring*

Day 1 United States-Quito, Ecuador

Departing from the United States you will arrive in Quito (9,300 feet), the colonial capitol of Ecuador, in the evening. Your guide will be at the airport and will help you transfer to the five star Hotel Colon. Centrally located the Colon is a meeting place for Ecuadorians.

Day 2 Quito

After breakfast at the hotel today you will enjoy a walking tour of the Quito's colonial center. Old Quito has been declared a national monument and today all of the buildings are painted in white with blue balconies and trim. Your tour features the old city visiting Independence Square, the San Francisco Monastery that was built of the remains of Hauyna –Capac's royal house in 1535, and El Panecillo, the most famous landmark in Colonial Quito from which it is possible to observe not only the city, but also the snow-capped volcanoes that surround the city. After lunch the afternoon is free to further explore on your own. Quito has a number of art galleries and an impressive archeological museum. Tonight we will have a welcome dinner in colonial Cusco at one of the great local restaurants. Accommodations: Colon Hotel
Breakfast, Dinner

Day 3 Quito-Cochasqui

Quito you will travel to the emerald green mountains of the Ecuadorian Andes. Our journey begins driving through open countryside passing traditionally dressed people working on their farms. Our first destination will be the ruins at Cochasqui. The ruins were built by the Cara Indians and had been largely forgotten until recently. In 1977, The area was declared a national archeological site and are now being excavated and investigated. At the site there are 15 grass-covered pyramids, or tolas, that were built in the 9th century. Surrounding the ruins are the lush green hillsides of Ecuador's highlands and the giant volcanoes of Cotapaxi and Illimiza, Ecuador's two highest peaks. After enjoying a neighboring walk we travel to the Casa Mojanda for the evening. Accommodations: Casa Mojanda *B,L,D*

Day 4 Cochasqui-Otavalo-Quito

After breakfast we will further explore the area around our hotel including the Mojanda Cajas which have lagoons where spotting condors can be quite frequent. From here we will travel to the highland town of Otavalo. Otavalo is located in the Imbabura Province, which is also known as the Lake Province. Its people are involved in the making of handi-crafts ranging from weaving, stone and wood carving and the making of leather goods. Before visiting the larger market we will stop in two smaller towns en route, Peguche and Agato to watch as locals weave their incredible textiles. In the afternoon we will drive to we will travel back to Quito. Accommodations: Colon Hotel *B,L*,

Day 5-8 Sacha Jungle Lodge-Amazon Rain Forest

On the morning of day 5 you will fly over the Andes from Quito to the Sacha Jungle Lodge in the heart of the Ecuadorian Rain Forest. An unforgettable adventure, a world of pristine ecosystems, abundant birds, beautiful butterflies and unusual animals in their natural habitats. Our trips are based out the Sacha Lodge. The lodge is situated in an area exceptionally rich in wildlife, a private protected area of 2000 acres of rain forest. Surrounding the lodge are 500 species of birds, 400 species of fish and over a 100 different mammals. A short walk from our lodge reveals a huge variety of fauna and flora including a monkey no bigger than a mouse, a liana as thick as a man's waist, a striped frog with poisonous skin, and a dry leaf which suddenly sprouts legs and walks and much more.

Situated on a jungle lagoon the lodge offers the perfect Amazon setting. Each of the charming cabins is set in a natural surroundings with modern bathrooms and hot showers. Upon your arrival in Eastern Ecuador you will be met by your guide and continue down the Napo River on motorized canoe. For the next two and a half-hours you can observe the homes of the Quichua people and their small holdings growing coffee, bananas and yucca. Arriving at the lodge you will take a short afternoon canoe ride on the lodges lagoon before enjoying your first evening in the jungle.

During your stay at the lodge you will join our native as well as naturalist guides on walks through the jungle. Blue Morpho butterflies, macaws and squirrel monkeys are a common sight while the sounds of the jungle will fill the sense forest air. Activities range from river rides to following trails and visiting observation towers. On a clear day you will be able to look through the dense green jungles toward the snow-capped peak of Sumaco, a non-active volcano. The observation decks also afford opportunities to see an incredible range of orchids, exotic birds, bromeliads and many other plants, some, that have still not been registered.

Another attraction at Sacha Lodge is a parrot salt lick situated further down the Napo from Sacha, a truly colorful spectacle where parrots and parakeets gather. For the next two and a half-hours you can observe the homes of the Quichua people and their small holdings growing coffee, bananas and yucca. Arriving at the lodge you will take a short afternoon canoe ride on the lodges lagoon before enjoying your first evening in the jungle.

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Another attraction at Sacha Lodge is a parrot salt lick situated further down the Napo from Sacha, a truly colorful spectacle where parrots and parakeets gather to take advantage of the minerals they ingest from the impressive red cliff. *B,L,D* (except dinner the evening of Day 8)

Day 8 Sacha Jungle Lodge-Quito

In the afternoon you will transfer back to Quito. The remainder of the evening is free to relax or further explore on your own before the following day's flight to the Galapagos. Accommodations: Hotel Colon

Day 9-16 Galapagos Cruise

Day 9 Quito-Plaza

In the morning you will transfer from the hotel to the airport for your flight to the Galapagos. The Galapagos are situated 600 off the shore of Ecuador. Your flight lands on the island of Baltra where you transfer to your motor or sailing yacht. After lunch on board we will our week-long trip through the Galapagos. Aboard small vessels you will be able to travel to places that the larger boats can not access. Allowing you superb animal viewing experiences. Today we cruise to the island of Plaza. Plaza is a small island with steep cliffs and fascinating wildlife. Plazas home to sea lion colonies as well as land and marine iguanas, swallow tailed gulls and red-billed tropic birds. *B,L,D*

Day 10 South Plaza-Santa Cruz-Santa Fe

Today we visit the Islands and Santa Cruz and Santa Fe. Santa Cruz is one of the largest islands in the Galapagos. As well it is home to the Darwin Research Station in Puerto Ayora. The lush highlands of Santa Cruz where we will see giant tortoises and visit extinct volcano cones. The highlands are home to a wide variety of birds. We should see brightly colored vermilion flycatchers, yellow flycatchers, egrets, and several of Darwin's Galapagos finches. Returning to our boat we will visit Black Turtle Cove where we have a chance to see sharks, rays and in season green sea turtles. Our final stop for the day will be the island of Santa Fe with its frolicking sea lion populations and dramatic Opuntia Cactus. *B,L,D*

Day 11 Santa Fe- Espanola

The island of Espanola is a true highlight, nearly all of the species found on this island are visible from Puenta Suarez, including: Albatross colonies, mocking birds, unusual red and green trimmed marine iguanas, and both blue footed and masked boobies. In the evening we will set anchor along one of Gardner Bay's beautiful beaches. *B,L,D*

Day 12 Espanola-Florena

From the Punta Commerant we walk to a Flamingo lagoon, where the species nest showing off their bright pink colors. The lagoon also hosts species of Galapagos Ducks and many other varieties of shore birds. In the afternoon we will snorkel at nearby Devils' Crown, an almost completely submerged volcano known for its brightly colored coral and tropical fish. Our day ends dropping a letter off at Post Office Bay, where in the 18th century whalers opened an unofficial post office in a barrel, for other visitors to take home and deliver. *B,L,D*

Day 13 Florena-Isabella

The largest island in the Galapagos, Isabella also has the highest peak, Volcano Wolf which rises more than 5,000 feet above sea level. This island has some of the most remote visitor sites including Punta Morena with its flamingos in an oasis among barren lava fields and flightless cormorants on the rocky shores. In the afternoon we will travel by panga through lush mangroves and small islets to view turtles and penguins. *B,L,D*

Day 14 Isabella-Fernandina

Before leaving the waters of Isabella we will visit Urbina Bay with its Land Iguanas and Giant tortoises. Fernandina may be the Galapagos's most virgin island. Here the impressive black volcanic rock formations are covered with marine iguanas sunning themselves. Sea lions dash in and out of the inlets and cormorants walk tipsily along the beaches, between pelicans and penguins. *B,L,D*

Day 15 *Fernandina-Santiago*

Off the coast of Santiago we will visit two smaller islands, Rabida and Bartalome. Radida with its volcanic red sand beaches and bachelor sea lions is our first stop before visiting Bartalome off the Eastern shore of Santiago. Jutting out of Sullivan Bay, Pinnacle Rock with its spectacular view of the Galapagos is the archipelagos most frequented island. In the afternoon we will have a chance to snorkel with penguins. Climb the volcano. *B,L,D*

Day 16 *Santiago-Quito*

our week long exploration of the Galapagos ends at Baltra where we will catch a flight to Quito. The afternoon is free to relax before our final dinner in downtown Quito. Accommodations: Hotel Colon *B*

Day 17 *Depart Ecuador*

In the morning you will catch a flight home. *B*

Trip Cost: \$3800 (6-8 participants) \$4000 (3-5 participants) \$4200 (2 participants) **Single Supplement:** \$600 (Available in Quito, Oltavalo, and Kapawi only-not on boats)

Internal Flights: \$550

We limit the size of our cruises to 16 people. It's a small group that will allow us to meet and interact with local people- not possible in larger groups. Guided by superb trip leaders with extensive backgrounds living and working with Ecuadorian people and traveling through out the country this trip is an incredible opportunity you could not receive with another company.

The cost of the trip will include everything while you are in Ecuador (unless note in the itinerary). This includes all guides, tours, lectures, accommodations in first-class hotels (4 nights Hilton Colon Hotel, 1 night Hacienda Casa Mojanda, 7 nights aboard a chartered sailing vessel or motor cruiser) food (meals noted in itinerary), entrance fees, and ground transportation. The price does not include international air fares, airport tax, Galapagos Park Fee, and personal expenses.