

## 4-DAY ECUADOR WESTERN ANDES



Explore the wonderful volcanoes of the Andes. Visit the highest capital in the world. Stand up in both hemispheres. Walk over 14,000 feet high above volcanic sand. Get to know a natural reserve that has the highest active volcano in the world. Relax at the foot of one of the beautiful waterfalls of Ecuador.

DAY 1: Quito city – Middle of the World



The Florence of the Americas, the little face of God, or the Franciscan city of Quito can be discovered by you in a fun half-day tour. Walk through narrow streets surrounded by elegant buildings built between the XVI and XVIII centuries. Find out what materials were used by indigenous groups for the construction of the first village of Quito. Listen to your local guide, who will tell you that the city of Quito was already inhabited more than 9,000 years ago. Quito was the first human settlement in the Andes mountains. Learn about the indigenous master builder.

The House-Museum collection has approximately 5,000 archaeological pieces, including utilitarian and ceremonial gadgets made with ceramic, stone, shell, metal, textiles, and wood. Each of these objects brings us closer to the spiritual, social, and political practices of the cultural groups that inhabited the diverse territory that is Ecuador today, from the Pacific coast, to the Andean mountains, cloud and tropical forests. "The museum is open from Wednesday to Sunday". In this case, we can visit another church museum.

Visit the oldest church in Quito that was built in 1535. This church still preserves its original architecture. Its main altar was bathed in gold leaf which makes it aesthetically impressive. Here, you can take photos and admire sculptures and paintings dating from the XVII or XVIII century. The first art school in the Americas and the first brewery were born in its convent.

Political, historical and administrative center of the city, where four powers of the state are located; the Presidential Palace, City Hall, Catholic Church Office and the main Cathedral are standing out to give life to the Plaza.

Our Lady of Quito is the largest landmark that contemplates and look out the city. Its imposing height is visible from all sectors. The place where it sits was a worship-ceremonial site of the first indigenous settlements, even before the Incas arrived from the south. The perfect place to discover more beauties of the city and take extraordinary photos during your visit.

Explore the Intiñan museum. This place represents the Equator Line and is located 200 meters north of the giant obelisk. Intiñan means sun trail. On the tour, you will be accompanied by a local interpreter from the museum who will show you up different sceneries that represent indigenous villages, old houses built several centuries ago, among other things. Also, you will carry out experiments will prove that you are in the middle of the world, including the experiment of stopping a raw egg on the head of a nail, if you succeed, the museum will delivery you a diploma as master of the egg.

Accommodation in a 3-star hotel Ikala or similar, in a double room.

## DAY 2: Cotopaxi National Park – Birding in the lagoon - Riobamba city



Take a short break and try a hot coca tea, this ancient drink will help you to mitigate the altitude sickness during the walk. From the viewpoint, you can see two extinct volcanoes and farms.

Upon arrival at the Cotopaxi National Park, we will carry out the respective check-in at the main entrance. From here, we will drive directly until we reach out the parking lot that is located at 14,763 feet above sea level. Here, we prepare to start a one-hour walk until we get in the Jose Ribas refuge, which is located at 15,748 feet. If you are not used to the height, you may feel a little fatigued, which is normal, for this reason, the walk can be slow and according to your physical conditions. After a great experience walking on the flanks of an active volcano, we will arrive at the refuge. The incredible view will be the reward of the walk.

Once in the refuge (4,800 m/15,748 ft), we just relax and enjoy a magnificent volcanic view so call the avenue of the volcanoes. Also, you can take amazing pictures and stamp your passport that will certify that you were in the highest active volcano in Ecuador.

After the succulent lunch, we will visit the Limpopungo Lagoon (3,900 m/12,795 ft), the lagoon is fed by waters of the stone-faced volcano. The lagoon is located next to the fearsome Cotopaxi volcano. It is possible to make a one-hour walk around the edge of the lagoon.

Exploring the lagoon, can encounter several species of birds including the Carunculated Caracara, Andean Lapwing, Andean Gulls, Andean Coots, Andean Teals, Great Yellow Legs (march), Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Tawny Antpitta, Baird's Sandpiper (July and August), Solitary Sandpiper (November and February).

Accommodation in a 3-star hotel Riobamba or similar, in a double room.  
Breakfast is included

### DAY 3: Chimborazo Natural Reserve – Indigenous town - Baños city



After breakfast, we head towards the Chimborazo fauna reserve. On the way, we will cross through colorful towns full of dynamism that gives the commerce of this area.

We will visit one of the most traditional indigenous towns of the area. People from this town is proud because it is considered the artisan capital of Ecuador. Within the best-known crafts that can be found in this canton are the weaving of Guano carpets and leather.

The Chimborazo volcano reserve is one of the most important in Ecuador. Also, the fresh water is protected since, it is born from the perpetual glaciers. Also, it feeds a series of animals that are found in this area, such as wild rabbits, deer, chucuris, south American foxes, pumas and opossums. The main ecosystem that we can find in this reserve is the so-called Andean paramo whose main characteristic is that it is always above 9,843 and reaches up to 14,764 feet. After breakfast, we head towards the Chimborazo fauna reserve. We will stop at a viewpoint to be able to contemplate the highest volcano in the world from the center of the earth (weather permitting). On the trip, you can admire the Andean landscape and especially llamas, vicuñas or alpacas that are grazing on the Chimborazo sandbank. Here, we will make a walk that starts from the first refuge to the second one, this walk takes approximately 45 minutes and is at a height of 16,732 feet.

Accommodation in a 3-star hotel La Floresta or similar, in a double room.  
Breakfast is included

Day 4: Tree house – Bride’s Mantle and Devil’s Cauldron waterfalls – Return to Quito.



Enjoy the swing of the end of the world, a swing that is above 7,545 feet above sea level. This swing will transport us to our childhood, even though its magnitude has no relationship with the swing we remembered, rather it is for adult people with a child's soul.

Next stop, we will be at the bride's mantle, named for the color that causes the water to fall, cross over the Pastaza river by Tarabita.

Embrace and experience one of the most impressive waterfalls in South America known as the Devil's Cauldron. The 80-meter waterfall high with a volume about 3,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water per second that falls into a giant pot-like. A descent hike will lead us to be in contact with this impressive waterfall. Capture with your camera incredible postcards of this wonderful tourist attraction.

Breakfast is included.

**The program includes:**

- A certified Guide/driver (English-speaking)
- Transportation
- Pick up and drop off from Quito city
- 3-night accommodation in a double standard room
- Activities according to the program
- Daily breakfast (Vegetarian and vegan options are available)

**The program does not include:**

- Travel insurance
- Optional and services not mentioned
- Tips, customary
- Single supplement room, \$140 per person

**Note** .- The tour is subject to availability, especially by local and national holidays. In case of bad weather, the tour can be rescheduled to a new date.