

## **ECUADOR HIGHLANDS 10 days**

### **Itinerary:**



### **Day 1 : Arrive Quito**

Upon arrival at Quito airport transfer to Cayambe and time to relax from your flight.

**Lodging:** San Juan Hacienda

### **Day 2 : Otavalo & Surrounding (B / D)**

After breakfast begin your tour with the sight of the volcano reaching a majestic 5790 meters. Cross into the province of Imbabura and its lake district and admire the biggest the icy Lago San Pablo. Next is Otavalo the town is famous for its open market offering a great variety of goods from antique pottery to wool sweaters and hand-woven tapestries. Near Otavalo are the small towns San Antonio de Ibarra popular for its woodwork and Cotacachi known for its leather goods. This drive north along the Avenue of the Volcanoes is both fascinating and fun.

**Lodging:** San Juan Hacienda

### **Day 3 : Otavalo - Quito (B)**

After breakfast make your way to Quito. Just 22 km north of Quito stands the monument marking the equatorial line as established by the 18th century expedition of the French / Spanish geodesic mission. Stand on both hemispheres simultaneously or try to stand right on top of the Equator. The top of the monument offers a great view of the Andes Mountains. Later enjoy a tour of the Ethnographic Museum.

**Lodging:** Mama Cuchara Hotel

### **Day 4 : Quito Tour - Cotopaxi (B)**

After breakfast start your tour with the Ecuadorian House of Culture and Alameda Park before entering Quito's colonial part. Visit the Independence Plaza, the beautiful French styled square bordered by the Cathedral and Government Palace. Explore San Agustin with its Moorish cloisters and Chapter Hall. Stop in at the La Compañia and San Francisco church, the Escorial of the Andes. Stroll up Calle La Ronda to reach El Panecillo Hill for a beautiful view of the Andean landscape. Later continue south via the Avenue of the Volcanoes to Lasso.

**Lodging:** Santa Ana Hacienda

### **Day 5 : Cotopaxi - Riobamba (B / L)**

In the morning admire the beauty of the surrounding area, if weather allows you see the Cotopaxi and then continue south to the Quilotoa Crater. Quilotoa is a beautiful emerald lake located inside a crater. If possible an Indian market can be visited en route before you arrive in Riobamba known as La Sultana de los Andes.

**Lodging:** Andaluza Hacienda

### **Day 6 : Devil's nose train - Cuenca (B)**

After breakfast drive to Alausi where the train station to the Devil's Nose is located. It is the most famous rail road portion in Ecuador due to the difficulty of the construction and also because it runs back and forth to get to the final station. In the afternoon continue to Cuenca via Ingapirca, Ecuador's major Inca monument. The massive fortifications are believed to have served as a religious and administrative complex as well as a fortress. The ruins include a roofless structure, courtyards, storehouses and the Temple of the Sun.

**Lodging:** Santa Lucia Hotel

### **Day 7 : Cuenca Tour (B)**

After breakfast start your tour of Cuenca, considered Ecuador's most beautiful city rich in history and filled with elegant reminders of its colonial past. It is surrounded by small villages whose citizens create jewelry, beautiful ceramics and masterfully designed hand-woven shawls. Walk along Calderon Park and enter the new and old Cathedral and visit the Monastery of El Carmen. See La Inmaculada Concepción, El Rollo del Vecino monument and the San José de la Merced Church. Also visit the nearby towns of Gualaceo and Chordeleg famous for handcrafts in gold, silver and embroidery.

**Lodging:** Santa Lucia Hotel

### **Day 8 : Cuenca - Guayaquil (B / L)**

After breakfast depart for Cajas National Park. The tour begins with a walk through a glacial valley. El Cajas National Park is home to quinoa forests, also known as "paper tree" forests. The bark of this tree is literally paper thin. On your way to Guayaquil city visit a cacao plantation and have a delicious typical lunch.

**Lodging:** Wyndham Hotel

### **Day 9 : Guayaquil Tour (B)**

Today visit the city starting with the Centennial Park in Avenue 9 de Octubre. Continue and pass by the San Francisco Plaza, Banco Central building and Civic Plaza in front of the Government House and City Hall. It is only a short walk to the municipal museum and the Seminario Park, also known as Iguana's Park in front of the Cathedral Church. The next stop is at the South Market in Malecon 2000. Then visit the Integration Plaza and artisans market, the Union Club and the first fort of Guayaquil. See the Moorish Tower, the City hall and the Rotonda Monument.

**Lodging:** Wyndham Hotel

### **Day 10 : Guayaquil - Departure (B)**

After breakfast transfer to the airport for your international return flight

