



# THE BEST OF ECUADOR & GALAPAGOS & YASUNI EXPLORER

13 DAYS

## OVERVIEW

A truly unique lifetime adventure blending the spectacular geography of Ecuador's mainland of active volcanoes, immense canyons, vast tropical rain forests and powerful waterfalls, with the enchanted Galapagos Islands, where the magic diversity of fearless animals flourishing in a volcanic ecosystem create an awe-inspiring atmosphere. This is a perfect combination that includes a wide variety of outdoor activities, while discovering the highlights of Ecuador in the same journey. With the Amazon camping expedition, you will have the Amazon Basin at your fingertips. It is the perfect adventure for nature lovers, jungle explorers and wildlife watchers who would like to experience the untouched Amazon. You will discover Ecuador's Amazon in the Yasuni National Park, world famous for its tremendous biodiversity and its authentic indigenous cultures which are still very much alive. On this trip, while kayaking down rivers and lagoons, you will feel as if the animals are following you. You will see displays of parrots, toucans, macaws, king fishers, herons flying across the river, as well as curious giant otters who will approach the canoe to have a look.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- > Snorkeling with sea turtles, rays, penguins and sea lions
- > Kayak to view wildlife
- > Tintorerias and lava tunnels
- > Charles Darwin Research Station
- > Encounter with wild giant tortoises
- > Sierra Negra volcano
- > Spend time with a local indigenous family in the jungle
- > Cotopaxi Volcano trek
- > Cloud forest biking and hiking
- > Amazon white water rafting
- > Amazon tropical rain forest canyoning
- > Papallacta hot springs
- > Deep amazon exploration
- > Wildlife at your finger tips
- > Kayaking rivers and lagoons in Yasuni national park
- > Enjoy kayaking with giant otters and pink dolphins
- > Parrots clay lick
- > Encounter with local Shamans
- > Amazon local living

## INCLUDED

**Transportation:** Comfortable land and sea transportation, canoe in the Amazon, dugout canoe.

**Accommodations based in double occupancy:** Luxury hotel in Quito, 4-star hotels in Galapagos, 4-star hotel in Baños, home stay in the Amazon, 5-star spa resort in Papallacta., 3 nights in Amazon Explorer Campsite - comfortable safari style tent camping inside of Yasuni National Park.

**Meals Included:** 14 breakfasts, 8 lunches and 4 dinner

**Trip Leader:** Certified AJ expert English-speaking naturalist trip leader and local guides.

## NOT INCLUDED

- > International flights
- > Flight to/from Galapagos: USD \$ 520.
- > Galapagos Ingala Card: USD\$ 20
- > Galapagos National Park Fee: USD \$ 100
- > Isabela Pier Fee: USD \$ 10
- > Airfare Quito-Coca round trip (optional travel by bus)
- > My Own Room & Tent supplement USD \$1 045
- > Airport transfers (international flights)
- > Travel insurance (mandatory)
- > Required immunizations (mandatory) (yellow fever vaccination)
- > Meals not described in the itinerary
- > Tips for guides, drivers and hotels
- > Donations to the community – Contact our [info@adventurejourneys.com](mailto:info@adventurejourneys.com) for guide lines

## FULL ITINERARY

### DAY 1

#### QUITO ARRIVAL DAY

Meet your AJ trip leader and group at 18:00pm.

Welcome to Quito! The largest, best-preserved colonial city of America - declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978. The city is considered the Cultural Capital of South America and is located on the equator in a valley at the foothills of the Pichincha volcano. Depending on arrival time, you can spend your day exploring the old town of Quito and the surrounding area.

ADVENTURE JOURNEYS can help you to organize a day trip (please request in advance). In the evening, one of our trip leaders will meet you at the hotel's lobby for a welcome briefing at 18:00 hours. At this time, we will discuss the details and questions you may have regarding the adventure.

**Accommodation:** Swissôtel Quito.

**Meals:** In flight



### DAY 2

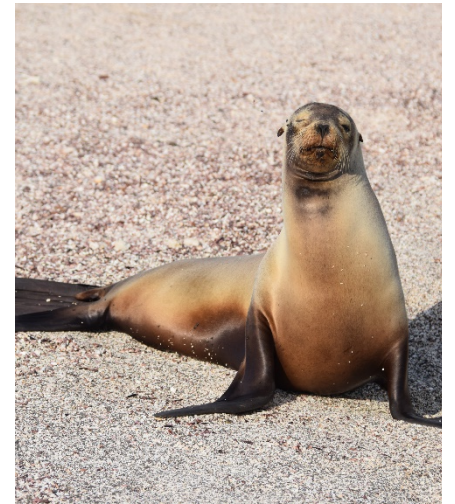
#### ISABELA ISLAND - GALÁPAGOS

Today we get ready to explore the most amazing archipelago in the Pacific coast and the place where Charles Darwin based his theory on the evolution of species. We will board a morning flight from Quito to the island of Baltra. Once we arrive, we head to the town of Puerto Ayora, the largest town in the Galapagos. From here we will take a quick boat to the largest island in the archipelago and where the most of the volcanic activity in the Galapagos is reported. The island was formed by six shield volcanoes, Alcedo, Cerra Azul, Darwin, Ecuador, Sierra Negra and Wolf; five of them are still active which makes the island one of the most volcanically active places on earth. During our island crossing, be on the lookout for dolphins and whales (July to October).

The Galapagos Islands is located 600 miles (965.6 km) from the coast of Ecuador, it is really important to understand that you will have to take air, road and sea transportation to get there.

**Accommodation:** Cormorant Beach House or similar.

**Meals:** Breakfast.



### DAY 3

#### SNORKEL AT LAVA TUNNELS

Explore the amazing formations of lava created by the last eruptions of the volcanic island along the seashore. This magical place has historically been filmed by BBC and National Geographic for their documentaries. It is a labyrinth of lava arches comprised of crystal-clear water full of sea turtles, eagle rays, sea lions, sharks and more. The turtles navigate their own highway from the mangroves to the open sea through "Los Tuneles". Here, we will have the best snorkeling opportunity with all these beautiful animals, including the curious Galapagos penguins playing around.

Before or after the trip, you can enjoy some optional activities such as snorkeling at "Concha de Perla", taking surfing lessons, biking or just relax on the exotic white-sand beaches of Isabela Island. We recommend you to take some time to visit the giant tortoise breeding center located walking distance from the hotel.

**Accommodation:** Cormorant Beach House or similar.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch.





## DAY 4

### HIKE AND KAYAK

After driving up from Puerto Villamil to the trail head, we will prepare our backpacks for the hike into a young forest ecosystem, a world of recent geological history. Our destination is the rim of Sierra Negra Crater, an active volcano which last erupted in June 2018.

Upon arrival, we take in breathtaking views and explore the circumference of the massive, lava-filled crater, a caldera that is over six miles across at its widest point. If we feel energetic enough, we can continue our hike to Volcan Chico, a secondary crater that has a wild landscape of puffing fumaroles and colorful lava formations; great examples of the dramatic geological events that have formed the Galapagos Islands over millennia.

In the afternoon we will visit Tintoreras Islet, located at a short distance from Puerto Villamil and home to a great variety of wildlife. Its turquoise, crystalline waters are inhabited by white-tipped reef sharks, Galapagos Penguins, marine turtles and sea lions. One of its beaches, surrounded by mangroves, is one of the few sites where marine iguanas can reproduce successfully.

**Accommodation:** Cormorant Beach House or similar.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch.

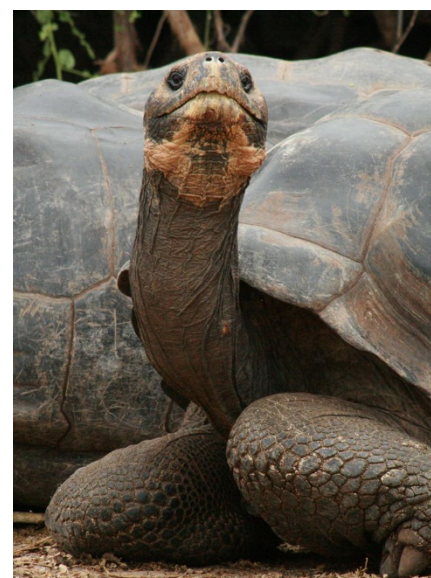


### CHARLES DARWIN RESEARCH STATION

In the morning, traverse from Isabela to Santa Cruz Island to visit the Charles Darwin Research Station. During our island crossing, we will be on the lookout for dolphins and whales (July to October). Once we arrive, we will check in at the hotel. We will then visit the Charles Darwin Research Station to Learn more about many of the endemic species seen in the wild, as well as the ongoing conservation and management efforts on the Galapagos Islands. In the afternoon, we will head to the 'El Chato' reserve in the highlands of Santa Cruz, home to the famous Galapagos tortoises. Hiking through El Chato's beautiful landscape with these lumbering giants is an unforgettable experience! We will also see other highland wildlife such as pintail ducks, egrets, flycatchers, finches and frigatebirds, which gather to wash the salt off their feathers at a fresh water lake. Afterwards, return to Puerto Ayora to spend the evening in Galapagos' most populous town.

**Accommodation:** Silberstein or similar.

**Meals:** Breakfast.



## DAY 5

### FLIGHT BACK TO QUITO

After our final breakfast on the Galapagos Island and the last photos taken of sea lions, we have a transfer to Baltra's airport in time to catch the flight back to the mainland.

**Accommodation:** Swissôtel Quito.

**Meals:** Breakfast.



## DAY 6

### FREE DAY IN QUITO

Today is a day on your own to explore the beautiful surroundings of Quito, ADVENTURE JOURNEYS can help you to organize a day trip.

- Colonial City tour & the Equador Line
- Discover Quito UNESCO city on two wheels!
- Mindo cloud forest
- Otavalo market fair.

**Accommodation:** Swissôtel Quito.

**Meals:** Breakfast.



## DAY 7

## DAY 8

### HIKE IN COTOPAXI

After breakfast, we leave Quito driving southwards along the gorgeous Avenue of Volcanoes, getting the chance to see the colorful Andean fields. On our way, we will reach 12,000 feet. (3657 meters). After arriving at the Cotopaxi National Park, we will go hiking around Limpiopungo lagoon of the foot hills of the Rumiñahui volcano. From here, we have the best views of Cotopaxi, the highest active volcano in the world. If the weather conditions permit, we will attempt to trek to the basecamp at 16000 ft. (4876 m).

In the afternoon we continue our drive towards the Llanganates National Park, known as the sacred mountain, until we reach the town of Baños, located at the entrance of the Amazon. Here we can enjoy the best night life by drinking cocktails and dancing salsa.

**Accommodation:** La Floresta or similar.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch.



### BIKING IN THE CLOUD FOREST

This morning we cross country mountain bike from the Llanganates National Park down to the Pastaza River Canyon, enjoying the beauty of the special cloud rain forest climate. The road brings us through some Andean farms and a great canyon with many waterfalls.

While descending into the jungle, we will have a breath-taking view of Baños, a town well known for its spectacular location right at the foothills of the Tungurahua volcano, which has been active since 1999. The volcano is the main attraction of this region. In the afternoon we will have some time to explore the town and also go to The Swing of the End of the World, where the winner of the 2014 National Geographic photo contest took his photo.

**Accommodation:** La Floresta or similar.

**Meals:** Breakfast.



## DAY 9

### CANYONING IN THE AMAZON

This morning we will hit the road of the waterfalls. The first stop will be at the Bride's Veil waterfall, where we will take the Tarabita (cable car) to get across the Pastaza River. Then we will hike down to the Pailon del Diablo waterfall, the second highest in Ecuador.

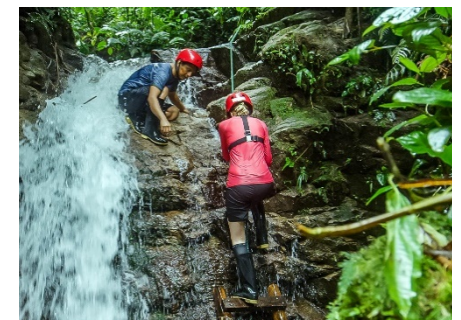
Later, we will go deeper into the jungle inside the Llanganates National Park. The name "llanganates" comes from "beautiful mountain" in the local native language. Here, 600 years ago, the Incas hid their golden treasures. Many explorers have spent years looking for these treasures, some have even disappeared with no luck in this dense pristine jungle.

During a hike through the tropical rain forest, we will climb through several waterfall canyons. Our local native guide will teach about the incredible flora and fauna that thrive in this unequalled habitat.

We will spend the night at the Local Basic Jungle Lodge run by a kichwa indigenous family.

**Accommodation:** Amazon Homestay.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.



## DAY 10



## DAY 11

### RAFTING IN THE AMAZON

We greet the day by preparing our gear to paddle the wild waves of the Jatunyacu River, located just a 5 minute drive from the homestead. The beauty of this river will inspire you and reveal the magic of the Amazon rain forest. After a very important safety briefing from our rafting guides, we will start our class III rafting expedition down the Jatunyacu River, well known for its clear waters and awesome rapids. We will have a lot of fun playing some games and also exploring one of the canyons. The end of the journey offers us a stop for a picnic, prepared by our guides.

We conclude our day with a drive back up to the Andes, stopping to visit the paradise of hummingbirds at the Guango Reserve. Finally, we will continue up to Papallacta, where we will stay the night and recharge in the volcanic hot springs high in the midst of the cool Andes.

**Accommodation:** Termas Papallacta.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch.

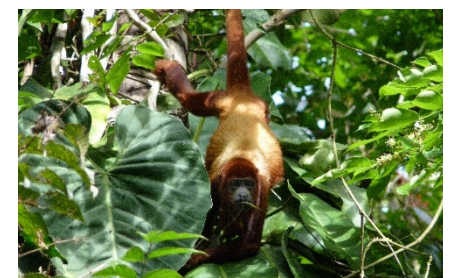


### FLIGHT TO COCA – MANDARI PANGA

Upon arrival in the city of Coca, you will be picked up by the staff of Mandari Panga to begin your tour. They will have the option to have breakfast before starting the journey to the camp, which is located within the Yasuní National Park, immersed in the enormous biodiversity of the area that is considered worldwide as one of the largest in the world. The trip will take 2 hours in land transport, an hour and a half in motorized canoe traveling along the Tiputini River with the whole extension of the park adorning the landscape. They will arrive to Mandari Panga where they can be accommodated in the first-class camping tents (located in typical constructions of high platforms with roof safe of mosquitoes), they will enjoy a delicious lunch; They will have a traditional welcome drink along with a small introductory talk by a guide. In the afternoon you will make a walk in the jungle with a duration of one hour and a half or two hours where you will observe some species of animals that live in the area, and then enjoy a delicious dinner served in the common dining room, where you can also share a pleasant moment with the rest of the passengers and staff of Mandari Panga.

**Accommodation:** Mandari Panga.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.



## DAY 12

### HUANGANA TRAIL WALK - VISIT GRAN MOTHER NATIVE HOUSE

After a delicious breakfast in the morning, you will cross the Tiputini river by canoe to the other shore to begin your hike in Huangana Trail that crosses the virgin forest where you will be partakers of the wild life in its maximum splendor, surrounded by the surrounding sounds of the nature and the screams of howler monkeys. The duration of the walk in a circle, is approximately 5 to 6 hours and at the end will be the canoe to go back to the camp; lunch delicious local cuisine in a place full of history and tradition, an old family home, which was rebuilt and now is the dining room of visitors, then you can rest to continue with the next walk in the Lamedero Sahino (wild pig clay lick), named for the species of mountain pig which is called pecari existing in the area with an approximate duration of one hour. In the afternoon, they will take a short canoe ride that will take them to visit the Abuela House (grandmother house), a traditional native construction of the Amazon allowing them to share a valuable time with members of the community, on this site they will participate in the elaboration of artisan chocolate traditional drink Chicha of yuca and many other amazon on skills. They will return to the camp and enjoy a delicious dinner, and then go on

## DAY 13



a night walk of about 1 hour where they can see all kinds of amphibians, fireflies, insects and arachnids.

**Accommodation:** Mandari Panga.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.

### VISIT TO PARROTS CLAY LICK - LOMA TUCÁN BIRDS WATCHING - TUCAN TRAIL

After breakfast, you will take a canoe trip of approximately 40 minutes against the current of Tiputini River, in this way you will be able to observe some species of animals, until you reach a small branch of a stream called Rumiyacu (stone river) that will guide you to the Parrot Lick: the place most representative of animal life and especially in variety of birds among them are: toucans, parrots, macaws, pigeons and other species of animals such as small tamarin monkeys, pigmy marmoset monkeys, in addition the place has sometimes predators such as: snakes, boas and raptors. At noon, they will return to the camp where lunch will be served to rest a little later. At around 3:30 p.m., the trek will begin along a new trail near the camp known as the Tucan Trail, which lasts approximately one hour; Back in the camp, you will go fishing for piranhas and other fish along the Tiputini River that can be served at the dinner that will be prepared upon arrival at the camp.

**Accommodation:** Mandari Panga.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.



DAY 14

### RETURN TO QUITO. DEPARTURE & END OF SERVICES.

Breakfast will be served early in the morning depending on the time your transport returns to Quito. They will leave the camp in a motorized canoe for an hour and a half and then take a 2 hours land transport to the city of Coca, then continue with their return trip. If the group has a flight in the afternoon or departure from the group by land, you could have an activity in the morning, an early lunch from Mandari Panga

**Meals:** Breakfast.



DAY 15

## LODGING IN THIS TRIP

LOCATION	ACCOMMODATION (BASED IN DOUBLE OCCUPANCY)
QUITO	<a href="#">Swissôtel Quito</a>
ISABELA ISLAND	<a href="#">Cormorant Beach House</a>
SANTA CRUZ ISLAND	<a href="#">Hotel Silberstein</a>
BAÑOS	<a href="#">La Floresta</a>
PAPALACTA	<a href="#">Termas Papallacta</a>