



Highlands and Coast Program

Duration: 12 days

Itinerary

Day 1 (includes lunch and dinner)

Arrival to Quito. Pick up from airport and transfer to hotel. Depending on arrival time, lunch and afternoon to rest. After dinner briefing about the program by our tour leader.

Day 2 (includes breakfast, lunch and dinner)

Visit to Quito's Colonial Center, declared World Culture Heritage by UNESCO. Visit the churches and squares and get to know their history and most interesting facts. Then we will visit the Middle of the World monument, which is located on the Equator and where you can actually move between the southern and northern hemispheres in one second. We will visit the Inti-Nam museum where we will observe some experiments that prove we are in the Middle of the World.

Day 3 (includes breakfast, lunch and dinner)

Departure from Quito (around 8:00 am) in the Highlands to Bahia de Caraquez (around 5:00 pm) in the Coast. During this trip we will admire the changes in vegetation, culture, ethnicities between the two regions. Due to the length of the trip, we will stop every 2 hours at different towns for taking pictures, stretch a little bit and learn about different locations on our way. Once in Bahia we will check in at a hotel in front of the ocean and have a delicious sea food dinner.

Day 4 (includes breakfast, lunch and dinner)

Morning to get to know the city (wheelchair friendly). After lunch (ceviche), depending on the tides (low or high), we will visit Isla de los Pájaros (Birds' Island) on the Bahia estuary. We travel in a paddle boat along the mangroves, where we admire the fragile ecosystem and bird watch. Return to Bahia just in time to admire the sunset from the boardwalk.

Day 5 (includes breakfast, lunch and dinner)

After breakfast we will visit the town of Montecristi (approx. 1 hour drive) where the famous Panama Hats are manufactured. See how the local people hand weave the hats and if we are lucky you will see how they manufacture high quality cigars. Here we will also visit the "Ciudad Alfaro" where our country's new Constitution was written and we will learn about one of Ecuador's most prominent leader (Eloy Alfaro). After this we will go to Manta (approx. 20 minutes) and enjoy the boardwalk in front of the ocean while we have some



fresh seafood. After a short sightseeing tour of Manta we return to Bahia de Caraquez for the rest of the evening.

Day 6 (includes breakfast, lunch and dinner)

After breakfast we will leave Bahia and drive back towards Santo Domingo. We will arrive around lunch time and check in at a very exotic lodge. For the afternoon we will simply enjoy a good book, sleep a little or relax in the gardens of the lodge. At night we could take a tour of Santo Domingo (very small town).

Day 7 (includes breakfast, lunch and dinner)

After breakfast we will visit a Colorado (Tsachila) community. In the community we will interact with the natives and also learn about their costumes, traditions, clothing, cooking and habits. After the visit to the community we will head back to the lodge for checking out and after lunch we continue our journey back to Quito. We will arrive at Quito for the evening.

Day 8 (includes breakfast, lunch and dinner)

After breakfast we leave Quito and drive towards San Pablo Lake (2 hours). On our way we will stop at Calderón, which is a small town outside Quito where the famous “mazapan dolls” (bread dough) are manufactured. We will learn how they are produced and watch the talented old ladies manufacture one mazapan doll for us!! We will continue our trip towards San Pablo Lake. We will admire the beautiful views of the Andes, snow capped mountains with the indigenous working and harvesting their land. San Pablo Lake will be our headquarters for visiting Otavalo, Cotacachi and the surrounding lakes. Check in at a very cozy hotel at the Lake shore. After a typical lunch which includes potato tortillas, pork, avocado, peanut sauce and boiled corn we will visit the “Cochasqui Pyramids”, which is a compound formed by 21 archeological pieces. This compound is believed it served as a ceremonial site, because 556 skulls were found in one of the pyramids. It is also believed that Cochasqui served as an astronomic location for the Quito-Cara culture, prior to the Inca’s empire.

Day 9 (includes breakfast, lunch and dinner)

After breakfast we will visit Otavalo, the most famous indigenous market. We will experience a mix of exotic colors, sounds and smells. Hundreds of local artists offer their products in this market. We can learn about the process of manufacturing the handicrafts, while we have a conversation with the indigenous. Lunch in Otavalo and then we will head towards Peguche Village, where we will learn how to manufacture traditional wind music instruments. We will also witness a typical dance presented by local artist. We can observe the differences between these natives and the ones from the Coast. Dinner and return to the hotel.

Day 10 (includes breakfast, lunch and dinner)



Ecuador is known worldwide by the excellent quality of its roses, that is why after breakfast we will visit a rose farm plantation. Fascinate yourself with all the rose varieties you can imagine and get to know the process from the time they are grown until they arrive to a flower store in the USA or Europe. Each of us will receive a small bouquet as a present. After a delicious lunch we will visit Cotacachi, which is the most famous town in Ecuador for leather products made by local indigenous people. Rest of the afternoon to rest at the Lake shore and prepare for departure next day.

Day 11 (includes breakfast, lunch and dinner)

After breakfast drive back to Quito. Afternoon free to pack, do last minute shopping or go for a walk in Quito (museum, skylift, parks, etc). After dinner we will give you a final overview of the trip with a presentation of all the pictures we have taken during the excursions. We will give every guest a CD with the pictures as a remembrance gift.

Day 12 (includes all meals before flight)

Departure to USA. or Europe

The price includes:

- All tours and activities specified in program
- Accommodations specified in program
- All entrance fees during tours and activities specified in program
- All meals specified in program
- Transportation specified in program

The price doesn't include:

- International airfares and airport taxes
- Any expenses not specified in program (personal expenses, alcoholic beverages, souvenirs, laundry, etc)
- Equipment rental or supply (if necessary)
- Personal insurance
- Any medical expenses