



# Ecuador & Galapagos Islands

## When to go

Weather varies greatly, depending on the altitude. The coastal and Amazonian lowlands have a wet equatorial climate, but the higher you go, the colder it becomes. Most large cities are located in a fairly comfortable subtropical zone, although it can be very cold at night in Quito. Further up, it can be cold at all times. Ecuador is a year-round destination, but highland areas are best visited during the dry season - from June to September. It is better to visit the Galapagos Islands between January and May, when the climate is classically tropical: hot air temperatures, wide stretches of blue sky, and occasional - but brief - downpours. The rain brings wet richness to the highlands, making them velvety green and flowery.

## Flying time

From London to Quito is 17 hours. Lan Ecuador and Iberia flights operate via Madrid.

## Time difference

Mainland: GMT - 5. Galapagos Islands: GMT - 6.

## Passport & Visa

Visa Required?

British  USA  Other EU

Passports must be valid for a minimum of 6 months..

## Health requirements

Diphtheria  Hepatitis A  Malaria Sometimes  
Tetanus  Typhoid  Yellow Fever Sometimes

*Recommendations do change from time to time and it is important to discuss your personal requirements with your doctor.*

For a country so compact, Ecuador is unsurpassed among Andean nations for its richness of ecological and cultural diversity. Begin in Quito, which is set in a verdant valley in the Andes Mountains. Explore the historic centre, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that is filled with Spanish colonial-era architecture. Discover the most interesting back streets, hidden courtyard gardens and historic churches with spectacular interiors. Quito is best seen on foot where shouting street vendors, narrow cobbled streets and tooting taxis bring the city to life. The highlights include the Plaza de Independencia with its 16th century cathedral and government palace, the plaza and monastery of San Francisco which was built in 1553 and contains some of the city's best architecture, the plaza and church of Santa Domingo, and El Panecillo where the grand statue of the Virgin de Quito sits on this hill that dominates the city, giving superb views of the city and its surroundings.

Only a short trip from Quito, Cotopaxi National Park is one of the most impressive national parks in Ecuador and it contains the famed and iconic Cotopaxi Volcano. The ecological reserve surrounds the snow-capped volcano, located on the border between the provinces of Pichincha and Cotopaxi. The national park is particularly interesting because the volcano suddenly surges out of relatively flat terrain, offering spectacular views of the volcano from all directions. The park contains excellent flora and fauna with herds of llamas and deer, hummingbirds and the elusive Andean condor, as well as excellent scenic walking trails. Continue along the spectacular avenue of the Volcanoes to Riobamba and Cuenca. Pass by Ecuador's highest volcanic peaks and the beautiful landscapes surrounding them, and tour village markets and the important Inca fortress of Ingapirca en-route.

Riobamba is a small, charming Andean city with colonial architecture, cobble-stone streets, impressive plazas and a fascinating market. The Monasterio de las Conceptas, Parque

Maldonado, the Riobamba Cathedral and the Municipio are lovely places to spend time exploring. Of all of the cities in Ecuador, Cuenca is arguable the most charming with its cobblestone streets, old-world cathedrals, colonial parks and urban rivers. The famously traditional Cuencanos continue their proud intellectual tradition that has produced more notable writers, poets, artists and philosophers than anywhere else in Ecuador. Cuencan culture and history are thoroughly represented in the city's many museums. Explore the historic centre and visit the most interesting sites such as the cathedral, the flower market and the ruins of the pre-Columbia Canari people. Also, stop at a local workshop to see Cuenca's most famous export, the elegant and timeless Panama hat, even today the best are still being woven by hand.

The nearby Inca ruins of Ingapirca are the largest in Ecuador and the most intricate and impressive. The ruins featuring a sun temple, believed to have had religious and ceremonial purposes, and some of the Inca's finest stonework including trapezoidal niches and doorways that are all hallmarks of Inca construction.

Next, spend four days exploring the Galapagos Islands, a dream destination for nature lovers, on one of our preferred expedition cruises. Each day visit different islands with an expert naturalist and get close to giant tortoises, blue footed boobies, marine iguanas and other iconic Galapagos wild life. See the cycle of life up-close, which depending on the season might include mating rituals, newborns feeding, territorial squabbles and more. Snorkel among sea turtles, playful sea lions and schools of brightly coloured fish.

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**Ecuador Encounter  
12 Days/11 Nights**

Quito/Riobamba/Cuenca/Guayaquil/Galapagos Islands

**Tour Itinerary**

- Day 01: Departure from London
- Day 02: Arrival in Quito
- Day 03: Sightseeing including Cotopaxi National Park  
Transfer to Patate
- Day 04: Travel to Riobamba with sightseeing stops en-route
- Day 05: Travel to Cuenca with sightseeing en-route
- Day 06: Cuenca full day tour
- Day 07: Fly to Galapagos Islands for 4 day/3 night cruise
- Day 08: Galapagos cruise  
-09
- Day 10: Galapagos cruise and flight to Quito
- Day 11: Morning Quito tour. Evening flight to London
- Day 12: Arrival into London

**Amazon Extension 4 Days/3 Nights**

Known locally as El Oriente, the Ecuadorian Amazon is a true rainforest experience. Situated a short distance away from Quito, you have the possibility of spotting giant armadillos, manatees, anacondas, fresh water dolphins and countless monkeys. Comfortable eco-lodges offer all the usual amenities but with minimum impact on the environment. The lodges are situated around lagoons or on the edge of the river, affording superb views across the Amazon. With over 1200 species of bird, numerous walking trails, medicinal trails, indigenous encounters and piranha fishing, there is an activity to suit most tastes. Local guides accompany all excursions.

Sacha Lodge, built along the banks of El Pinche lagoon, contains a 3 storey high main building with restaurant, bar, library and observation platform. The 10 double cabins, each with private facilities, balconies with hammocks, hot water and forest views are all linked to the main building by wooden boardwalks. The lodge has a network of trails, canoes and you are able to swim in the lagoon.