

ECUADOR

Hiking Volcanoes and Canoeing Amazonia



December 9 - 20, 2018

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TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Explore Quito, one of the best-preserved colonial cities in Latin America, and the first to be declared as a UNESCO World Heritage City
- ▶ Ride on horseback like an Andean cowboy and learn about their culture
- ▶ Disconnect from the world on an optional solo overnight in the highlands of the Andes - get back to your camping roots!
- ▶ Search for wildlife and learn about the rainforest ecosystem in the Amazon basin
- ▶ Sleep in traditional Andean haciendas and learn about the local families who run the haciendas
- ▶ Galapagos Islands extension available

QUICK VIEW ITINERARY

- Day 1: Arrive in Quito, welcome dinner
- Day 2: Explore the old town of Quito, drive to the border of Cotopaxi National Park
- Day 3: Ride horses with a local cowboy, explore the area on foot
- Day 4: Visit Cotopaxi National Park, hike five hours in the Andes
- Day 5: Optional solo experience in the Andean Highlands in a tent
- Day 6: Drive through Cotopaxi National Park, afternoon mountain biking on farmland
- Day 7: Fly to Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, explore the river by canoe
- Day 8: Hike into the rainforest, explore the flooded forest by canoe, night hike
- Day 9: Cook with indigenous women, swim in the lagoon, spot caimans at night
- Day 10: Meet with a local shaman, paddle in the lagoon, repack to head back to Quito
- Day 11: Head back to Quito by boat, road, and plane, farewell dinner
- Day 12: Depart for the US

TRIP PRICE

Main Trip: \$5,990

Internal Air: \$700

Optional Single Accommodations: \$1,290

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is this trip
right for me?

Activity Level:

Moderate

Active

High Energy

Challenging

the important
stuff

We rate this trip as High Energy. Our High Energy adventures are designed for women who enjoy a physical challenge and crave being on the go! You should be prepared for itineraries that include (but are not limited to): a full day of biking on rolling terrain, hiking 5-8 miles on moderate to steep trails, being active at high altitudes, whitewater rafting, or skiing.

how do I get
there?

We recommend training before your trip (with your doctor's permission!) to make the most of your adventure. We have a partnership with FitForTrips, a company that will design an individualized fitness plan for you with this itinerary in mind. Best of all, AdventureWomen guests get a 25% discount with the code FITWOMEN. Learn more at: <https://fitfortrips.com/partners/adventure-women/>

pack your
bags!

You should come with a flexible, adventurous, and enthusiastic spirit, and a wonderful sense of humor that adventure travel requires.

the fine print

your adventure
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Forms and Final Payment:

Once you book, you will need to fill out and return to AdventureWomen:

- Information Form
- Booking Conditions Form
- Copy of Flight Information
- Copy of Issuing Page of Passport (photo page)

Final payment is due to AdventureWomen in a cash form (check, money order, or wire transfer) on or before September 10, 2018.

Passports and Visas:

Citizens of the United States must have a passport valid for six months beyond your travel dates with at least two blank facing pages. If you do not have a passport, please apply now!

Health Considerations:

Make an appointment with a travel clinic. There are no immunization requirements for travel to Ecuador, however your local travel clinic may have recommendations for you based on your age, health, and past vaccination history.

For more health information, go to www.cdc.gov/travel and navigate to the page about Ecuador.

Money:

US Dollars are the official currency of Ecuador. Credit cards are only accepted in larger cities. ATMs will only be available in Quito. We suggest bringing cash for your trip to Ecuador.

Suggested Gratuities:

- ▶ Main guide: \$8-10 per day
- ▶ Drivers: \$5 per day

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Arrive: Arrive in Quito, Ecuador (UIO) on December 9, 2018 before 3:00pm.

Depart: Depart Quito, Ecuador (UIO) on December 20, 2018.

We are happy to help you make your flight and travel arrangements. Please contact us at:

(800) 804-8686 or (617) 544-9393
email: info@adventurewomen.com

If you'd like to do anything prior to or following the AdventureWomen trip, we'd be delighted to help you arrange any trip extensions you're interested in.

Note: The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure time than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible booking last-minute registrants, we must release hotel rooms two to three months prior to departure! Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.

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Packing Considerations: You should be prepared for all types of weather on this trip. Temperature ranges are relative to altitude than to seasons, and weather changes happen rapidly. In Quito and Cotopaxi, the average temperatures can range from 32 - 77F, and in the Amazon, the average temperature is from 68 - 86F.

Plan on dressing in casual, comfortable clothing on this adventure. We recommend dressing in layers. In the rainforest, we recommend long pants and long sleeves to help avoid mosquitos.

Baggage note: For your internal flight, your checked luggage can weigh no more than 44lbs.

Clothing and Gear:

- Duffel bag
- Daypack
- Medium-weight, waterproof hiking boots (make sure they are broken in!)
- 3-4 pairs wool hiking socks
- 1-2 pairs tall socks to wear with rubber boots in the Amazon
- 1 pair of lightweight long underwear (top and bottom)
- 2-3 short sleeve shirts (quick dry recommended) -
- 2-3 long sleeve shirts (quick dry recommended)
- 1 medium weight fleece sweater/jacket for cool evenings
- 1-2 pairs of pants
- 1-2 pairs of shorts
- 1 set of nicer clothes for dinner
- 1 bathing suit
- Waterproof jacket and pants (Gore-Tex recommended)
- Hat for sun protection
- 5-7 pairs underwear
- Hat, scarf, and gloves
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sandals
- Sleepwear

AdventureWomen Essentials:

- Travel documents (passport, airline tickets, money)
- 2-3 spare passport photos (in case of lost passport)
- Write down/print out travel insurance number
- Locks for your suitcase/duffel bag
- Travel alarm clock with spare batteries
- Headlamp or small flashlight with spare batteries
- Binoculars (8x40/42 models are excellent choices; center focus models are easiest)
- Digital camera, memory cards, battery charger
- Power adapters
- Sunglasses, case, and strap

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Essentials Continued:

- Spare glasses, contact lenses, cleaner, saline, etc.
- Money belt or neck pouch
- Your AdventureWomen insulated bottle (good for hot or cold drinks!)
- Sunscreen and lip balm with SPF
- Mosquito repellent
- Hand wipes/hand sanitizer
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Soap, shampoo, and conditioner
- Small packet of tissues
- Tampons and panty liners (avoid plastic applicators)
- Earplugs: We recommend Mack's Pillow Soft White Moldable Silicone Snore Proof Earplugs. Available at most drugstores or at www.earplugstore.com
- Assortment of stuff sacks and Ziploc bags
- 1-2 bandanas/Buff
- Reading material/journal and pens

Personal First Aid Kit:

- Prescription medicine you usually take (in original containers)
- Personal epi pen (if you need one, don't forget to pack it!)
- Bandages, Gauze, Ace bandage, blister prevention
- Antiseptic wipes/spray
- Antibiotic ointment
- Cotton-tipped applicators
- Oral rehydration tablets/packets
- Antidiarrheal medication
- Mild laxative
- Antacid
- Cold remedies
- Ibuprofen/acetaminophen
- Eye drops
- Tweezers, scissors (travel size), safety pins

If you prefer to buy a complete kit, we recommend the Smart Travel first aid kit.

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Cancellations and Refunds

Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date, and the registration deposit is non-refundable.

the important
stuff

For cancellations received 61-90 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the total trip cost is non-refundable. For cancellations received 1-60 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the total trip cost is non-refundable.

how do I get
there?

You are highly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance to cover emergency situations. Travel insurance information will be sent to you once you have registered for your trip.

Switching Trips

If for some reason you need to switch to a different trip, please call us and we will do our best to accommodate you.

pack your
bags!

No Smoking Policy

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on AdventureWomen vacations.

Health Insurance

You must have your own health insurance to participate in an AdventureWomen trip.

the fine print

Adventure Travel Today

At AdventureWomen, we want everyone to understand that our excursions are adventure travel vacations and not "tours." We define "adventure travel" as travel in which one **actively participates**, as opposed to a "tour," in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes vacations all over the world for women who want to **experience an active, out of the ordinary vacation, and meet new friends**. Most of all, we want our trips to be **fun!**

good-natured realist and have a sense of humor! Adventure vacations, by nature, require that participants be self-sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist. The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. **Being on time** is important, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well-being of both individuals and the group!

your adventure
in depth

In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a

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your adventure in depth

DAY 1

Sunday
12/9/18

Arrive in Quito

Ecuador is a magical country with its own way of life in the heart of South America. It is a country full of variety and amazing scenery, yet easy to get around as the distances from one region to another are relatively short. Ecuador has everything: virgin beaches, unexplored jungle, active volcanoes, snow-capped peaks, lakes, different kinds of forests, mangrove swamps, friendly cultures rich in tradition, colonial towns, and large modern cities.

Pick-up and Transfer

You will be picked up at the airport and transferred to your hotel.

Welcome Dinner

Enjoy a welcome dinner and group orientation this evening.

Accommodations

Hotel Casa Gardenia

Meals Included

dinner

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DAY 2

Monday
12/10/18

Quito to Cotopaxi

Visiting Quito, Ecuador's Capital city, is a vibrant experience and a great starting point for this journey of discovery. Located on the high Andes, it offers beautiful scenery, local markets, delicious restaurants, and excellent shops. Considered the best preserved Colonial town in South America, the city of Quito was declared the World's first Heritage site by UNESCO.

Explore Old Town

This morning, explore the Colonial casque known as the Old Town, a stunning portion of well-preserved Colonial buildings that dates back to the 16th century. Quito's Old Town is truly unique, and is a vibrant and authentic portion of the city.

Lunch

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

Drive to Cotopaxi

Head south out of Quito this afternoon, through what the German explorer Humbolt designated as the Avenue of the Volcanoes. Arrive at Hacienda El Porvenir, a working traditional farm in the buffer zone of the Cotopaxi National Park, will be your home away from home.

Relax This Afternoon

Relax this afternoon at the Hacienda. You might want to make an appointment at the spa before dinner!

Accommodations

Hacienda El Porvenir

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 3

Tuesday
12/11/18

Accommodations

Hacienda El Porvenir

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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Cotopaxi

Cotopaxi National Park is known for the volcano of the same name, which suddenly surges out of relatively flat terrain, offering spectacular views of the volcano from all directions. The ecosystem is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, including a unique combination of pine vegetation and wolves, pumas, bears, rabbits, condors, wild horses, and foxes.

Horseback Riding

After a delicious hacienda breakfast, start getting acquainted with horses in a way that you never have before! Learn to become part of the herd this morning. After a safety briefing, a local Chagra (an Andean cowboy) will teach you to saddle your horse. Get dressed in the typical dress of the chagra, and ride out across the slopes of the dormant volcano, Rumiñahui. The chagra will join the group and share some of his deep knowledge of the country life.

Lunch

Enjoy lunch back at the Hacienda.

Afternoon Hike

Go on a short hike to a waterfall this afternoon. This will help you adjust to the altitude before your hike tomorrow.

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DAY 4

Wednesday
12/12/18

Cotopaxi to the Andean Highlands

Cotopaxi is one of the highest volcanoes in the world, and is the second-highest summit in Ecuador. The mountain was honored as a “Sacred Mountain” by local Andean people, even prior to the Inca invasion in the 15th century. It was worshiped as “rain sender”, that served as the guarantor of the land’s fertility, and at the same time its summit was revered as a place where gods lived.

Cotopaxi National Park

Explore Cotopaxi National Park with your guide to see the landscapes and wildlife on your way to the trailhead.

Hike to Hacienda El Tambo

Start hiking towards Hacienda El Tambo on the eastern flanks of the Andes. This hike will take most of the day, and you’ll cover nearly ten miles of trail. You will cross hills and valleys, guarded over by Quilindaña, a peak hard to see from the Central Andean Valley and which looks very much like the Matterhorn seen from the Italian side. You will hike at an average altitude of 12,100 feet today. The highest pass will be 13,400 feet. The hike will take about five hours. Reach the farmhouse this afternoon, an old mountain refuge, built on Inca stones. This hike will be strenuous, but you’ll enjoy spectacular views and the solitude of the Andes. This is true wilderness.

Accommodations

Hacienda El Tambo

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 5

Thursday
12/13/18

Andean Highlands

The valleys of the Andean highlands are home to some beautiful creatures. Hummingbirds abound; in these valleys, you can observe the largest hummingbird in the world, the hummingbird with the longest beak drinking nectar from trumpet flowers, or a hummingbird with a tail twice as long as its body.

Optional Solo Experience in the Andean Highlands

Plunge into a life changing solitary experience in the highlands of the Andes today. Over the next 24 hours, spend some time reflecting on your life. Write in a journal. Read a book. Do whatever you'd like. In this constantly connected world, taking 24 hours to spend completely alone is an opportunity you rarely get; enjoy this unique experience in a beautiful setting.

You will be provided a tent, sleeping bag, insulation pad, water, and food for today and tonight. You will also have a radio in case you should need assistance.

For those who choose not to participate in this solo option (unique to AdventureWomen!), relax at the Hacienda and go on some short walks nearby today. It will be nice to relax after yesterday's long hike.

Accommodations

Tent and Sleeping Bag

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 6

Friday
12/14/18

Andean Highlands to Cotopaxi

In Cotopaxi, mammals that frequent the park include redbrocket deer, Andean fox, Andean puma and white-tailed deer, and, of course, the rare Andean spectacle bear. Birdlife is plentiful here as well.

Breakfast at the Hacienda

Enjoy breakfast and share stories of your solo experience with the group.

Drive Through Cotopaxi National Park

Leave Hacienda El Tambo and head to Cotopaxi National Park. Explore the park on your way through, looking for unique mammals and birdlife along the way.

Mountain Biking

After a short briefing on how to handle your bike and testing it, start riding on the hacienda trails. This amazing five-mile long single track passes through native woods that have been planted for habitat restoration and conservation. The trail zig-zags uphill with a gradient between 5 and 8 degrees. This is the ideal afternoon adventure. Don't worry - you don't need to be an experienced mountain biker to enjoy this excursion!

Accommodations

Hacienda El Porvenir

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 7

Saturday
12/15/18

Cotopaxi to Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve

Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve covers over 1.4 million acres of primary rainforest and possesses an incredible variety of Neotropical wildlife: river dolphins, caimans, anacondas, monkeys, spiders, and butterflies. The bird life is spectacular; the prehistoric-looking hoatzin, the umbrella bird, the blue-headed parrot, the scarlet macaw, and the legendary harpy eagle.

Fly to Lago Agrio

Depart Hacienda El Porvenir this morning for your hour-long flight to Lago Agrio.

Boat Transfer to the Lodge

Meet your jungle guide when you arrive and have lunch in a local restaurant. Take a motorized canoe along the Cuyabeno River to your lodge Laguna Grande. During this two-hour journey, observe rich wildlife along the riverbank. After settling into your room at the Lodge, go on a tour of the lagoon to observe animals, take a swim in the lake, and enjoy the sunset from a canoe.

Accommodations

Cuyabeno Lodge

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 8

Sunday
12/16/18

Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve

The Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve is an important nature reserve in Amazonia with unusual ecological characteristics. Located at the foothills of the Andes, it is different from any other Amazon protected area in the world. The area encompasses a poorly drained plain with a network of periodically inundated forests, lakes, and creeks. Such conditions are rare so close to the Andes, where the drainage in the foothills prevents the development of swamps and lakes. Given its proximity to the mountains, combined with a slightly cooler and wetter climate, it has a different species composition in comparison to other areas in the upper Amazon watershed.

Walk in the Forest

After breakfast, walk through the “terra firma forest” with your naturalist guide. Learn about the wildlife, medicinal plants, and the forest ecosystem. You’ll be provided with waterproof boots when you need them here!

Explore by Dugout Canoe

Enjoy lunch before you head to the flooded forest. Travel by dugout canoe to the flooded parts of the forest with macrolobium trees. The trees are covered with epiphytes, and you’ll be able to spot monkeys and birds.

Night Hike

This evening, head out on a hike with your headlamp to look for nocturnal flora and wildlife. Most wildlife in the Amazon is nocturnal, so this is a perfect way to explore all that the ecosystem has to offer.

Accommodations

Cuyabeno Lodge

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 9

Monday
12/17/18

Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve

There are no other parks in the Amazonian Andean countries of Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, or Bolivia with so many lakes and creeks that are as conveniently accessible as Cuyabeno. Enjoy another day exploring this unusual ecosystem.

Meet Local Women

After breakfast, head downstream on the Cuyabeno River to the Siona indigenous village. Immerse yourself in a transformative cultural experience within an indigenous community. Work alongside the local women to cook the typical “casabe,” share stories, and gain an understanding of their way of life.

Lunch

Enjoy lunch at the lodge.

Swimming

Take an afternoon dip in the lagoon.

Night Caiman Spotting

After dinner, head out in a canoe to search for caimans, snakes, and nocturnal birdlife.

Accommodations

Cuyabeno Lodge

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 10

Tuesday
12/18/18

Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve

The Amazon region of Ecuador is primarily made up of the huge Amazon national parks and vast stretches of land set aside for the Amazon Amerindian tribes to continue living traditionally. The population is primarily mixed Amerindian Shuar, Huaorani, and Kichua, although there are numerous tribes in the deep jungle which are little-contacted.

Meet a Local Shaman

Learn some of the wisdom of a shaman through his rituals. This is an excellent opportunity to align what you learned during your solo experience with the shaman's teachings.

Canoeing

Paddle in the lagoon this afternoon, experiencing the simultaneous silence and cacophony of this natural setting.

Afternoon at Leisure

Relax at the lodge this afternoon. Repack your bags to head back to Quito.

Accommodations

Cuyabeno Lodge

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 11

Wednesday
12/19/18

Accommodations

Hotel Casa Gardenia

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve to Quito

Leave the reserve this morning and head back to Quito, Ecuador's capital.

Transfer to
the Airport

Transfer by boat and by vehicle this morning from the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve to the Lago Agrio Airport.

Fly to Quito

Fly to Quito, arriving late this afternoon.

Farewell
Dinner

Have a farewell dinner with your new AdventureWomen friends. Reminisce over all of the memories you have made and celebrate the end of an incredible trip!

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DAY 12

Thursday
12/20/18

Quito and Depart

Enjoy one last morning in Quito before departing for the US.

Transfer to
the Airport

Say goodbye to your new AdventureWomen friends
as you transfer to the airport for your flights home.

Meals Included
breakfast

Please note: AdventureWomen will attempt to adhere to the itinerary as much as possible. However, certain conditions (political, climatic, environmental, and cultural) may necessitate changes in the itinerary. AdventureWomen reserves the right to alter any itinerary at any time, if necessary. We will attempt to notify participants of changes as far in advance as possible. Costs incurred by such changes will be the responsibility of the participants.

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Accommodation Details

Hotel Casa Gardenia

Hotel Casa Gardenia is a remodeled old house combining ancient and modern, creating a unique hotel concept in the historic center of Quito. It is located a few blocks from the main plazas, churches, museums, restaurants and shops of the old town, declared by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

Hacienda El Porvenir

Hacienda El Porvenir is set in a traditional Andean house with adobe walls and thatched roofs only 2.5 miles from Cotopaxi National Park. With parquet floors and large windows, rooms at El Porvenir are very bright.

Hacienda El Tambo

Hacienda El Tambo Quilindaña dates back to Inca times as a refuge on the road leading the jungle. Experience pristine and unique landscapes during your adventure. In this unique spot in the Andes, everywhere you look, you will see the solitude and beauty of a valley bathed in rivers and the silence and ever-present wind of the “páramo”.

Tent and Sleeping Bag

For your solo experience, you will have a tent, sleeping bag, insulated sleeping pad, water and food. Enjoy getting back to the AdventureWomen roots of camping!

Cuyabeno Lodge

The Cuyabeno Lodge is certified by the Rainforest Alliance for its sustainable tourism practices and for its use of local materials in the construction of the facility. The lodge works closely with the local Siona indigenous community, whose members provide motor canoe transportation for the tours at the Cuyabeno Lodge. Scattered throughout the grounds are seven detached thatched-roof wooden cabins, a perfect base from which to explore this unique place.

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Included/Not Included

Included:

- ▶ All hotel accommodations throughout the trip
- ▶ All meals as listed in the itinerary
- ▶ All ground transportation
- ▶ Fully-guided sightseeing as indicated in the itinerary
- ▶ English-speaking guides throughout the trip
- ▶ Drinking water
- ▶ One AdventureWomen Associate

Not Included:

- ▶ International airfare to and from Ecuador
- ▶ Domestic airfare
- ▶ Optional activities as listed in the itinerary
- ▶ Meals not specified in the itinerary
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages
- ▶ Fees for passports, visas, or immunizations
- ▶ Cost of hospitalization or evacuation
- ▶ Items of a personal nature
- ▶ Gratuities