

Day 1 **Transfer in international flight directly to Otavalo**
Overnight on Hacienda Pinsaqui



Day 2 **AB**
OTAVALO

Travel along the Pan-American Highway north of Quito and watch as a magnificent assortment of landscapes and destinations roll by. Not far past the equator lies the small village of Calderon, known for its unique bread dough figures. Beyond Calderon, pass through the deep valley of Guayllabamba, abounding in fruit trees and flowers. Stop by Cayambe, the most important town on the way to Otavalo, popular for its dairy industry. Catch the sight of the now-extinct volcano bearing the same name and reaching a majestic 5790 meters.

Cross into the province of Imbabura and its lake district. Admire the biggest of the lakes, the icy Lago San Pablo. The area surrounding this lake is dotted with many Otavalo Indian villages. Not far from this lake lies Otavalo, the town famous for its open market, offering an overwhelming variety of goods ranging from antique pottery to wool sweaters and hand-woven tapestries. Otavalo Indians are the most ambitious and prosperous of the Indian groups in Ecuador, often travelling abroad to sell their wares. Yet in spite of their exposure to foreigners, they have not lost their ethnic identity and traditions. For instance, they still wear their colorful and distinctive costumes.

Notice the men wearing one long ponytail, white shirts and pants, blue/gray ponchos and dark felt hats, while the women are striking in their bright hand-embroidered blouses, gold beads, long skirts and head cloths. Near Otavalo lie the small towns of San Antonio de Ibarra, popular for its woodwork and Cotacachi, known for its leather goods and accessories. This drive north along the Avenue of the Volcanoes is both fascinating and fun.



On the way, we will stop for a panoramic view of Middle of the World.
Overnight Hotel Dann Carlton or similar



Day 3 BB
AM – QUITO CITY TOUR

Drive along the broad avenues of the modern city and see the Ecuadorian House of Culture, the Congress building and Alameda Park before entering Quito's colonial section. Walk along the narrow cobblestone streets and feel the charm of 16th century Quito. Visit Independence Plaza, the beautiful French styled square bordered by the Cathedral and Government Palace. Stop in at the renowned La Compañía Church, whose ornate gold leaf interior and elaborately carved altars have been renovated to recapture their days of glory. Visit the wide open plaza and impressive church of San Francisco, built in the 16th century by the Indians of St. Andrews School. Continue to El Panecillo Hill for a beautiful and impressive view of the Andean landscape.



PM - QUITO CABLE CAR

Starting from the base of the Pichincha Volcano at 9.6980 ft the small cable cars will transport you to 13.284 ft . There are 18 cabins with a capacity of 6 passengers each that climb 3.600 ft in 10 minutes! The cable cars climb up the moorlands, allowing the passengers to observe the changing vegetation of the Andean Highlands. At the top you find restaurants that overlooks the whole city of Quito and if the day is clear, you can observe the surrounding volcanoes: Antisana (18.700 ft) Cayambe (18.725 ft), and Cotopaxi (19.347 ft)

At the feet of the Teleferiço an interesting project has been inaugurated. Includes a small amusement park , a food court, gourmet restaurants, a handicraft plaza,



Overnight Hotel Dann Carlton or similar

Day 4 FULL DAY PAPALLACTA HOT SPRINGS (lunch included)

Located in the Highlands of Ecuador on the way to Misahuallí via Pifo. Take this opportunity to enjoy the Hot Springs benefits of crystal Hot thermal waters of the Andean Mountains known to help people with respiratory and cardiovascular problems.

Discover the adventure spirit within you by walking or riding on horse at 3.300 meters above sea level and see Condors, Bears, Pumas and other species unique to this zone. Walk to the "Rancho del Canon" and admire waterfalls and the Cayambe Coca Ecological Reserve.



Overnight Hotel Dann Carlton or similar

Day 5 Tapir Lodge

After buffet breakfast our pax will be transferred to Quito airport in order to take their flight to Lago Agrio.

Meeting point is at Mariscal Sucre International Airport, at 08:00 AM in the national departure information booth. A Nomadtrek representative will assist you with flight check in and provide you with your box lunch. The flight duration is about 30 minutes (Boeing / Embraer Aircraft average capacity 100 passengers) to the city of Lago Agrio. The airport is located outside the city; therefore we will not spend much time in Lago Agrio. Our private transportation (pick-up trucks, four wheel drive vehicles or buses) will drive us (2 ½ - 3 hours) to “El Puente” (The Bridge), which is the entrance to the Cuyabeno Reserve.



Throughout this drive you will have the opportunity to see beautiful landscapes created by the combination of rainforest, rivers and small towns; 80% of this road is paved and the following 20% is open road, this means that depending on the weather conditions, we could expect a dusty or muddy road. On “El Puente” we will enjoy our box lunches and continue our trip via motorized canoe (12mts. / 24 ft. long); the luggage will be covered with plastic for protection, to prevent it from getting wet in the event of rain. We will also provide you with rain ponchos and life vests. In this narrow river you will be able to admire some of the wide variety of flora and fauna the Cuyabeno Reserve has to offer. After close to 2 ½ hours of navigating, we will arrive around dusk to the beautiful Tapir Lodge (05:00-06:00 PM). Dinner will be served at approximately 07:30 PM; after dinner the guide will inform our guest of the next day’s activities, and the required gear. Overnight spent in our cozy and relaxing lodge.

Day 6

After a good night's slumber, our day begins with our delicious breakfast, which is served at approximately 07:30 AM. Once breakfast is concluded, we will prepare to depart on our first journey of the day, but first we will provide our guests with rubber boots. At 08:30 AM we will meet at our pier and take our canoe; depending on the size of the group, we may take the motorized canoe or the paddle canoe (small wooden canoe 5mts. / 15ft. in length) which the indigenous inhabitants use as their main source of transportations and call them Quillas. These small yet stable vessels can accommodate up to four passengers and guide. We will navigate upstream to "Laguna Grande" (Big Lake) enjoying a slow ride in order to observe the surrounding Flora and Fauna. Our travel time should be about 30 minutes (paddle canoe 1 hour). Once we get there, we will appreciate this one of a kind Igapo or inundated forest. The Flora that can be found here is quite unique, with macrolobium trees abundant in numbers and ancient of age; which have adapted to the surrounding environment allowing them to grow straight out of the water. These majestic and antique trees create the perfect habitat for other plant life, such as Bromeliads, Orchids, Ferns and Cacti. Once we complete our Igapo excursion, we will travel to "Terra Firme" and begin a trek on a path called Palma Roja "Red Palm"; this path was once part of a scientific research station belonging to the Catholic University. This will be our first encounter with primary rainforest, which is the habitat for many terrestrial mammals; such as Tapirs, Capibaras, Jaguars, Agoutis and many more species native to the rainforest. These creatures are usually shy or active during nocturnal hours.



Before our trek begins, there will be brief explanation regarding basic ecology of the rainforest. The duration of this trek is close to 3 ½ hours. On the way you will come across a swampy area but not to worry, our expert guide will lead you through the right way. There will be the opportunity to admire a variety of ancient trees, long Lianas and Giant Palms. We also hope to have the opportunity to see and hear many species of birds such as Woodpeckers, Tanagers, Macaws, and Toucans; and with luck we will come across two or three species of Monkeys. This trek follows a path that loops around in the rainforest; bringing us back to our point of origin. Our return time should be around 01:30 PM, to take the canoe back to Tapir. Lunch will be served at the lodge at about 02:20 PM, followed by a resting period of approximately 2 hours. During this time guests will have the option to try Piranha fishing or just relax in our hammocks to read or take a "Siesta" (Spanish for nap). At 05:00 PM we will again meet at our pier, and take the canoe to a new area of "Laguna Grande". Once we get to the



lake we will navigate through the surrounding area searching for birds and other animals. The option of swimming is available and it is a perfectly safe and relaxing activity. Depending on the weather, we may be able to admire a breathtaking sunset, as we pass the time enjoying the surrounding symphonies of the rainforest until night fall. Once nighttime joins us, with the aid of our flashlights we will look for animals on the shores of the lake and river. Typically, in very bright nights (full moon) the chances of finding caimans is minimal, however there are other animals that may be found such as birds and tree snakes. Once the evening activities are concluded, we will return to Tapir around 07:00 PM. During this free period before dinner, guests are welcome to take a shower, have refreshing drink at our bar or to chat with the guide about the day's events. Dinner will be served at 07:45 PM; after dinner depending on the weather conditions we can take a quick night trek around the lodge looking for frogs and other night wanderers. Overnight spent at Tapir Lodge.

Day 7

Depending on the weather conditions, we may have an early start and head out on a bird watching excursion. At about 06:00 AM we will take our canoe and navigate with the rivers current, relax while you admire all the flora and fauna found along the river as we search for exotic birds, native to this region. Ranging from Blue and Yellow Macaws, Scarlet Macaws, Blue Tailed Emeralds, Hoatzins, and Amazon King Fishers, just to name a few. Boasting with a bird list of more than 500 species; makes the Cuyabeno Reserve a privileged location for birding and a delight for seasoned as well as beginner birdwatchers. Our return to the lodge should be around 07:00 AM. Upon our return, Breakfast will be served at 07:30 AM. After the breakfast service, we will meet at the pier. Today we will travel downstream. We will enjoy a 2 hour Canoe ride as we search for Morphos (Giant Blue Butterfly), Toucans, Macaws and with some luck Monkeys, combined with an excellent view of the surrounding rainforest. On our way we will pass the village of Puerto Bolivar where the inhabitants, known as the Siona have chosen to reside. Following Puerto Bolivar, we will stop at a small settlement. Here we will have the opportunity to visit and meet Alberto the local Shaman, as well as his family. These natives belong to the Cofan ethnic group. Presently Alberto spends part of his time curing and treating the local inhabitants with his vast knowledge of medicinal plants. The visit to this small settlement will also be our entry point for a new trek into the rainforest. This part of the rainforest is the habitat of the tiny Ecuadorian Poison Frog. Our trek will begin along the river bank. There we will be greeted by marvelous ancient Kapok trees. Some of these magnificent specimens are at least 800 years old; the roots of these ancient marvels can grow as big as a small room. The path that we will follow, leads us through small creeks and at the end of the trek (2 hours approximately), we will arrive at Alberto's backyard. There we will break to enjoy a tasty box lunch and relax.



Once we conclude our lunch break, Alberto will spend some time with us. This humble man carries within him more than 50 years of wisdom and knowledge regarding the rainforest and the use of medicinal plants. He will share with us some of the many experiences he has had with the rainforest, other shamans and process of healing people. For our interested guests, you can participate in a “healing” ceremony which should last about 40 minutes. There will be some free time to ask Alberto questions or simply take pictures of and with him. Handcrafts are available for purchase, all of them crafted out of materials provided by and obtained in the rainforest. We say goodbye to Alberto and his family (about 03:00 PM) and navigate back to Puerto Bolivar. There we will be greeted by a local Siona family, where we will take part in the preparation of Cassava Bread. The Yuca (Cassava) Root (*Manihot Esculenta*) has always been an essential food supply and perhaps the main source of carbohydrates for the indigenous communities of the rainforest. After gathering the Yuca (Cassava), it will be peeled and grinded into a paste; this “paste” is then pressed to eliminate the humidity and the starch. The remaining dried product will be fried in a pan for a few minutes; obtaining a “pancake like bread” of neutral taste which we will be able to sample. We say goodbye to the village and navigate back to Tapir arriving just before dusk. Dinner will be served at around 08:00 PM. After dinner we will serve and enjoy a farewell Passion Fruit Cocktail, as we take a little time to introduce our hard working, attentive and diligent staff members; whom without their cooperation, assistance and courteous service Tapir Lodge could not provide our guests with the first-class service we trust you will receive from your first day with us. Confident that we will meet and exceed your expectations we hope that your stay with us is a pleasant and comfortable one, making your experience at Tapir memorable and one of a kind. Overnight spent at Tapir.

Day 8

Breakfast will be served at 08:00 AM. After breakfast we will coordinate and schedule your departure from Tapir. Departure time is generally between 10:00 AM and 11:00 AM depending on flight times, river and road conditions as well as the guide’s decision. Our staff will attend to the luggage as they make sure it is all loaded onto the canoe. We will depart Tapir and make our way back to the bridge. Our private transportation will be waiting for us. Drive back to Lago Agrio. Arrive to airport.

Transfer in Quito, airport to hotel.

End of program