



ECUADOR  
GAY TRAVEL

## PACKAGE 1:

### Quito & The Andes

-Itinerary highlights-



## DAY 1: Saturday

**Arrival to Quito:** Quito’s “Mariscal Sucre” International Airport (UIO) is one of the busiest airports in South America, and the best one in the region at the 2018 at the World Travel Awards. It’s located about 11 miles east of the city.

**Welcome to Quito:** Quito is the capital and the largest city in Ecuador (population: 2.7M). At 9,350 ft. above sea level it’s the highest (constitutional) capital city in the world.

**Transfer from airport to our Airbnb:** Our luxurious property is located in a safe, private, sought-after area of the capital, with some of the most incredible views of the city.

## DAY 2: Sunday

**Pululahua Crater** (weather permitting): is one of only two volcanic craters inhabited in the world, and the only one that is farmed. The land here is extremely fertile because it is volcanic soil. The caldera of this extinct volcano is approximately 3 miles wide, one of the largest volcanic craters in the planet.

**Temple of the Sun:** Its structure resembles a castle, and is the home of a temple that reveres the Sun like Ecuadorian pre-Columbian indigenous did, and at the same time it’s a museum and art repository for the famous Ecuadorian artist that constructed and owns this complex.

**Intiñan Museum:** This onsite museum located right on top of the Equator Line features interactive exhibits on how the Incas determined the middle of the Earth, plus interesting science experiments such as balancing an egg on a nail and the affects of the Coriolis force on earth.



**Middle of the World City:** The grounds of this “city” contain the Monument to the Equator, which highlights the exact location of the Equator (from which the country takes its name) and commemorates the 18th century Franco-Spanish Geodesic Mission which fixed its approximate location. The complex includes museums, interactive exhibits, restaurants, shops, etc.

**Welcome dinner at Itchimbia:** Finish your first full day in Ecuador by enjoying dinner at an exclusive restaurant with arguably the best view of Quito by night.

## DAY 3: Monday

**Quito’s Old Town:** Quito was the first city to be declared a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site because it has the largest, least-altered and best preserved historic center in the Americas. In last year’s World Travel Awards, Quito won the 1<sup>st</sup> place for Cultural Destination in South America!

**Plaza Grande and Changing of the Guard:** 30-minute ceremony with bands, troops on foot and horseback, and flag raising. This weekly event takes place at Plaza de la Independencia (or Plaza Grande), which is the principal square of Quito where the Presidential Palace, City Hall and Cathedral are located.

**Metropolitan Cathedral of Quito:** known simply as La Catedral, is the Catholic cathedral in Quito, which makes it the seniormost Catholic church in the country.

**The Church of the Society of Jesus:** known as La Compania, is a Jesuit church best-known because of its large central nave, which is profusely decorated with gold leaf, gilded plaster and wood carvings. This is one of the most significant works of Spanish Baroque architecture in South America. It is Quito’s most ornate church and (according to many) the country’s most beautiful.

**Church and Monastery of St. Francis:** commonly known as “San Francisco”, is a 16th-century Roman Catholic complex. It fronts onto its namesake Plaza de San Francisco. The imposing structure has the distinction of being the largest architectural ensemble among the historical structures of colonial Latin America. The style evolved over almost 150 years of construction through earthquakes and changes in artistic fashion.

**Casa Gangotena:** sophisticated family manor house turned boutique hotel smack dab in the middle of Quito. 1920s elegance, colonial charm, and the elegance and luxury of a bygone era, featuring a grand terrace perfect for soaking up the picture-postcard city views, and a restaurant serving modern Ecuadorian cuisine as good as you’ll find.

**La Ronda:** Old-world La Ronda is the most romantic and magical street in Quito. The lantern-lit streets and floral balconies enhance the romantic ambiance, making La Ronda one of the crown jewels of Quiteño culture. A series of doorways open up to a courtyard and multiple art galleries, museums, craft shops, and elegant restaurants.

**Virgin of El Panecillo:** A 45-meter-tall stone monument of a madonna which was assembled on a high pedestal on the top of Panecillo hill. Locals claim that she is the only one in the world with wings like an angel. This hill and the virgin can be seen from anywhere in Quito’s Historic Center.

**The Basilica of the National Vow:** known as La Basilica, is the most important work of neo-Gothic Ecuadorian architecture and is one of the most representative of the Americas. It is the largest neo-Gothic basilica in the New World. The building is noted for its grotesques in the form of native Ecuadorian animals such as armadillos, iguana, and Galapagos tortoises.



**Teleferiqo** (weather permitting): this gondola lift runs from the edge of the city centre up the Pichincha Volcano. It's one of the highest aerial lifts in the world, rising from 10,226 to 12,943 ft. The ascent takes about 20 mins. and is rewarded with the most amazing cloud-high views of Quito and the surrounding mountains, volcanoes and sky-capped peaks.

**Dinner at Casa 1028 Mobile Restaurant:** This first-of-its-kind in Ecuador will take you on a night tour through Old Town while you enjoy traditional appetizers and drinks. Experience the flavors and traditions of Quito and get to know the stories and legends born from the Colonial time.

## DAY 4: Tuesday

**Traditional Andean breakfast:** Enjoy the warmth of an hacienda-style breakfast with delicacies of the highlands such as “nata”, the cream that thickens from boiling local milk. It is naturally sweet, creamy, silky, and tastes great on bread or “bizcochos”.

**Cotopaxi:** This active, ice-capped volcano is located about 31 mi south of Quito. It's the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest summit in Ecuador (19,347 Ft. ) and one of the world's highest volcanoes. The last eruption lasted from August 2015 to January 2016.

**Quilotoa:** is a water-filled caldera and the most western volcano in the Ecuadorian Andes. Since its last eruption, the 2 mile-wide caldera has become an 820 ft deep crater lake, which has a greenish/turquoise color as a result of dissolved minerals.

**Overnight in the city of Riobamba:** You will spend a restful night at this hacienda-style mansion in the middle of beautiful Andean landscapes has been declared Cultural Heritage of Ecuador. It houses centuries of history that showcases the roots of

Ecuadorian culture and the colonial life of Spaniards.

## DAY 5: Wednesday

**Ride on Devil's Nose train:** The biggest complication faced by the construction of the Trans-Andean railroad was the Devil's Nose, a mountain with almost perpendicular walls. To overcome this obstacle, a zigzag railroad was built, making this thrilling ride an impressive piece of engineering in the middle of breathtaking scenery.

**Overnight at Baños de Agua Santa:** Simply known as “Baños” (baths), this city is the gateway to the Amazon Basin, the last city located in the mountain region before reaching the jungle. It is known for access to the Tungurahua volcano (on of South America's most active), beautiful waterfalls and landscapes, and mineral-rich hot springs.

**Dinner at Heaven's Cafe:** “Café del Cielo” provides a spectacular view of the city Baños, the Tungurahua volcano, and a National Park, while you enjoy your meal and any of the huge selection of coffee and tea.

**Spa night at hotel:** You've reached halfway of your stay in Ecuador. if you want to venture out of your luxurious room but don't feel like strolling through the extraordinary gardens, focus on your well-being in its exclusive spa with indoor heated pool.

## DAY 6: Thursday

**Devil's Cauldron:** This legendary waterfall is one of many in this area, and definitely the most spectacular and dramatic one. It's a massive 262 ft tall and a mightily impressive sight when its in full flow. The site features



several viewpoints included a suspension bridge.

**Swing at the End of the World:** Probably the most famous tree-house worldwide is the home of this iconic swing. With only a seat belt to hold you in, it arcs riders out into the air over jungle treetops while you enjoy the epic thrill and stunning views of the wilderness.

**Baños by night:** Complete your visit to Baños with your personal choice of a night out in the city, panoramic sightseeing, or famous healing hydrothermal baths.

## DAY 7: Friday

**Typical Andes lunch:** On our way back to Quito, enjoy this traditional delicacy of the area, a platter with deep fried pork, hominy, potatoes, fried plantains, empanadas, popcorn and pork rinds. A must in Ecuador's cuisine!

**Optional: Nudist Day at Robles Sauna:** Quito's best gay bathhouse. Relax and meet locals while enjoying the sauna, steam room, hot tub and other facilities in a clean, laid-back atmosphere.

**Dinner and drinks in La Floresta:** Quito's most chic neighborhood features dozens of restaurants and bars with top of the line worldwide cuisine and décor. Some venues transition from restaurant to bar and even dance club as the hours and drinks flow, and the neighborhood becomes the best and safest area to bar-hop in the capital.

## DAY 8: Saturday

**Breakfast and San Pablo Lake:** Enjoy a wholesome breakfast with local "bizcochos" and "queso de hoja" as you take in the breathtaking scenery and beauty of this

majestic lake on the skirt of the Imbabura volcano.

**Otavalo Indigenous Market:** One of the largest and most famous markets in South America. The indigenous Otavalo people are famed for weaving textiles, usually made of wool, which are sold at the world-famous Saturday market. In this artisan market you will find anything from jewelry, clothing, and traditional home décor to (fake) shrunken heads.

**Lunch at La Mirage Garden Hotel:** This former hacienda is a paradise of plant life filled with a thousand fragrances from its bougainvilleas, hibiscus, roses and orchids. Exquisite cuisine is luxuriously served in the hotel's glass pavilions on the lawn, while watching peacocks strolling and hummingbirds flying by.

**Shopping in Cotacachi:** This little artisan town is famous for its leather goods and handicrafts. The city of Cotacachi holds a UNESCO medal for being free of illiteracy. In 2000 the entire canton was declared the first ecological county of South America.

**Visit to Cuicocha Lake:** The name of this crater lake comes from the guinea pig shape of the largest Island in the middle of it. These animals play a significant part in the everyday life of Ecuadorians, as they reproduce rapidly and need a minimum of food and care to survive. They make for a high protein meal especially for populations living in high altitude.

## DAY 9: Sunday

**Typical Coastal breakfast:** Start your last day in Ecuador with a delicious homemade meal as you would experience it in the Ecuadorian Coast. From plantain empanadas to shrimp ceviche, you will



enjoy a unique mix of flavors and sensations to prepare you for a long day.

**Guayasamin's Home and Museum:** In the former hillside home of the legendary painter Oswaldo Guayasamin, this wonderful museum houses the most complete collection of the artist's work, famous for his social justice themes. The visit includes entry to the "Capilla del Hombre" (The Chapel of Man), a purpose-built art museum dedicated to the peoples of Latin America.

**Lunch in Cumbaya:** In the last decade, this former small rural village close to the capital has become one of the most stylish, hip (and expensive) residential and entertainment areas to live in or around, and features world-class restaurants, country clubs, gastro-pubs, clubs and bars.

**Papallacta Hot Springs:** Located in a magical High Andes landscape, this spa and resort is an integral holistic experience that will awake all your senses. Discover the beauty of nature and the healing properties of mineral hot springs. This relaxing afternoon will prepare you for your trip back home tonight.

**Transfer to airport:** Wow, what a ride! Your 8-night vacation in Quito & The Andes have come to an end. If you're ready to start your adventure, contact us today, spaces are limited. If you'd like to combine some of this trip's highlights with the magical Galapagos Islands, check out our Package 2 that includes 4 days and 3 nights in a private yacht!

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*Ecuador Gay Travel, LLC reserves the right to alter the itinerary as needed and with no previous notice due to hotel availability, weather, temporary maintenance closings, local holidays, etc. We will make sure we replace the accommodation or activity with a similar one so your overall experience isn't affected.*