



SMALL GROUP TOUR

NOVEMBER 2022

- Detailed Itinerary -



DAY 1: MONDAY, NOV. 21

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 2018-19 World Travel Awards. It's located about 11 miles from the city. Our team will be there to greet you and assist with luggage.

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 hotel: Private transportation for the group. A beautiful and strategically located 5-star hotel near Downtown Quito awaits with complimentary high speed wifi, in-room coffee and tea, a plush duvet and Egyptian cotton linen, and electric curtains.

DAY 2: TUESDAY, NOV. 22

Enjoy the breakfast buffet at the hotel at your leisure between 6:30 and 10am. The Old Town tour starts at 1pm.

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 2019's World Travel Awards, Quito won the 1st place for Cultural Destination in South America!

The Basilica of the National Vow: know 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 jaguars, armadillos, iguanas, and Galapagos tortoises.



The Church of the Society of Jesus: known as [La Compañía](#), 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.

Plaza Grande: La Plaza de la Independencia (or Plaza Grande) 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.

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.

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.

Finish your first full day in Ecuador with a traditional welcome dinner at [Pim's Restaurant](#) while enjoying arguably the best view of Old Town by night.

DAY 3: WED, NOV. 23

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.

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.

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.

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, shops, and a restaurant where we will have lunch.

Ride back to Quito to rest and/or enjoy Quito at leisure as you get ready for your Galapagos cruise.



DAY 4: THURSDAY, NOV. 24

Transfer to the airport for an early flight to Baltra Island, home to Galapagos's main airport, where you will meet your Naturalist Guide. The total flight time will be approx. 3 hours. The Galapagos Islands will be your second [UNESCO World Heritage site](#) visit this trip!

Transfer to Monserrat Yatch: This [First Class 20-passenger yacht](#) is chartered exclusively for our group. It was refurbished in 2018. Cruising on a small boat has less impact on the Galapagos ecosystem, while benefiting from a more intimate setting for our group and a more personalized service from the 11 crew members. Onboard amenities include private ensuite bathrooms, A/C, an ample sundeck with recliners and shaded area, dining room, bar and lounge, and complimentary snorkeling equipment.

Mosquera Island: In the afternoon, visit the highlands of Santa Cruz and see the Galápagos giant tortoise in its natural surroundings. Explore the area and its incredible underground lava tunnels – some are more than 0.6 miles long! Wander along the volcanic tubes and keep an eye out for the (mainly) nocturnal barn owls that sometimes roost here.

Dinner onboard, next-day briefing session, and first night onboard our private yacht.

DAY 5: FRIDAY, NOV. 25

Rabida Island: Wet landing. This island features a unique reddish landscape with trails that lead to a saltwater lagoon and where the revered 'palo santo' trees grow. Head back to the beach to see prehistoric-looking pelicans nesting among low-lying bushes, sea lion colonies. Then take a "panga" (dinghy) ride from the beach to a cliff wall

that drops off into the water to snorkel in one of the best deep-water spots in the island.

Lunch onboard.

Bartolome Island: Dry landing. This island features distinctive lava formations and ash-cones, as well as a 375-step wooden ladder that takes you 114 meters above sea level to the top of the volcano, where a spectacular view of the bays below awaits you. The prominent Pinnacle Rock is located on this island, and is one of the most visited and photographed sites in Galapagos. Take the opportunity to swim and snorkel around it. Home to Galápagos penguins, friendly sea lions, sea turtles, and a huge variety of fish, Bartolomé and its surrounding waters are a fantastic place to explore the natural wonders of the Galápagos (45-60 mins).

Dinner onboard and next-day briefing session.

DAY 6: SATURDAY, NOV. 26

South Plaza Island: One of the smallest islands in the Galápagos, which has one of the largest populations of land iguanas. Walk along a path through a cactus forest and view a combination of dry and coastal vegetation on this lively island, home to a wide range of fauna, including incredible birdlife. Spot red-billed tropicbirds and indigenous swallow-tailed gulls resting on the cliffs, and sea lions playing in the waters.

Lunch onboard.

Santa Fe Island: Lace up your hiking shoes to explore the island's flora and fauna. Trek toward the cliffs along the island's northern shore to see a forest of giant prickly pear cacti (Opuntia). See endemic land iguanas lounging in their favorite forest, and feasting on Opuntia pads and fruit.



Dinner onboard and next-day briefing session.

DAY 7: SUNDAY, NOV. 27

San Cristobal Island: Enjoy amazing wildlife watching and interesting geological formations on this fascinating expedition. Arrive at a quiet cove on the eastern tip of the island to explore Punta Pitt. Made up of volcanic tuff substrate, it's the only site in the Galápagos where it's possible to see three species of boobies and two species of frigatebirds. Snorkel around Punta Pitt and spot schools of fish swimming below. On the shore, admire the nesting birds and sun bathing sea lions.

Lunch onboard.

Visit Cerro Brujo to explore its coastline, and look for wildlife on the beach, in the water, and in the air. Learn about the human and natural history of the area from the Galápagos CEO. Take a refreshing dip in the turquoise water, and head out on a short walk to a freshwater lagoon – a great place to see flamingos.

Dinner onboard and next-day briefing session.

Last night onboard.

DAY 8: MONDAY, NOV. 28

Lobos Island: Explore this tiny island off San Cristobal by foot and boat for some great wildlife encounters. Take a dinghy ride to view the sea and shore birds nesting and feeding. Spot a small colony of blue-footed boobies as well as two species of sea lions. Snorkel right off the beach amid the families of sea lions and their inquisitive pups looking to play. Spot nesting frigate birds and the famous blue-footed boobies resting on the shore. Be sure to bring your camera to catch

some snaps at this prime wildlife watching haven.

Short ride to the city of Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of Galapagos, in San Cristobal Island, where we will disembark and transfer to the airport for our flight back to Ecuador's mainland. At the airport you will have time to have lunch on your own and access wifi before boarding your flight to Quito (approx. 3 hours, including a short layover in Guayaquil).

Upon arrival to Quito, private ground transportation (approx. 90 minutes) to the magnificent 300-year-old [Hacienda Pinsaqui](#) boutique hotel off the quaint Andean town of Cotacachi. End the day with dinner in the hacienda's dining room.

DAY 9: TUESDAY, NOV. 29

Condor Park: Is a non-profit wildlife refuge for owls and raptors, including the endangered condor, one of Ecuador and the Andes' most important symbols. At 11:30 you will enjoy a live show with local birds of prey while you enjoy astounding 360° panoramic views of the San Pablo lake and the Imbabura volcano. Great opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of environmental conservation.

Lunch in one of the city of Otavalo's best traditional restaurants.

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.

Town of 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. Enjoy a free afternoon to shop and wander around this beautiful town.

Alternatively, you can choose to stay in the hotel and enjoy their [spa treatments](#) (not included).

Traditional dinner at La Casa del Turista restaurant.

DAY 10: WED, NOV. 30

Visit to Cuicocha Lake: The name of this crater 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 Ecuadorian indigenous people, 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. You will enjoy a guided boat ride around the islands.

Farewell gourmet lunch at [La Mirage Garden Hotel and Spa](#), one of the country's finest hotels.

On our way to Quito's airport (approx. 90 minutes) for your international flight back home, and depending on everybody's flight times, we might surprise you with a stop or two along the way.

Wow, what a ride! Your 9-night tour of Quito, Galapagos and The Andes has come to an end. If you're ready to start your adventure, book today, spaces are limited! For a visual itinerary, pricing and inclusions, please visit:

www.ecuadorpridetravel.com

If you're continuing on our tour extension to Cusco and Machu Picchu, please continue reading:

Upon your arrival to Lima's International Airport you will be welcomed by a representative of our partner tour operator COLTUR, who will assist you to your hotel, the [Aloft Lima Miraflores](#).

DAY 11: THURSDAY, DEC. 1

After breakfast at the hotel, we will head to Pueblo Libre district to visit to the [Larco Museum](#), an eighteenth-century Viceregal mansion that houses more than 3,000 years of Peru's pre-Columbian history. The museum boasts a supremely fine collection of gold and silver jewelry and worship paraphernalia that demonstrates the superb skill of ancient Peruvian gold and silversmiths. The Larco Museum also contains a famous collection of erotic ceramic tomb art that gives insights into various aspects of pre-Columbian sexuality. The visit will be greatly enriched by the curator of the Museum, who will provide in-depth explanations and serve as a unique conduit to the past. All areas are illuminated to showcase the beauty of the museum's pieces.

Lunch at [Café del Museo](#).

After lunch, we will continue our tour to the **Colonial City of Lima**. First, we will stop off at the Main Square, to explore it on foot and admire the exteriors of the Government Palace, the Cathedral, and the City Hall, all examples of Lima's still-present colonial architectural opulence. We will visit the **Cathedral**; as walking through its numerous chapels, we will discover various architectural styles and learn about the religious history of Peru. We will continue with the visit to [Casa de Aliaga](#), a colonial mansion that currently holds the distinction of being the oldest continuously inhabited private residence in the Southern



Hemisphere. Finally, we will begin a journey through the streets of modern Lima as head toward the most traditional of the residential zones of the capital: San Isidro, the heart of the city's financial district; and Miraflores, a perfect spot to enjoy wonderful views of the Pacific Ocean.

DAY 12: FRIDAY, DEC. 2

Transfer to Lima's airport for your flight to Cusco. Upon your arrival transfer to the beautifully hand-painted [El Retablo Boutique Hotel](#) in Cusco.

In the afternoon we will begin the exploration to the nearby ruins: the **fortress of Sacsayhuaman**, a colossal structure of enormous stones, carved and fitted together with incredible precision; **Qenqo**, the religious center; we will enjoy a panoramic view of Puca-Pucara, the red fortress and then we will visit **Tambomachay** with their water fountains. Afterwards, our tour continues in the Imperial City, we will stroll through the Main Square, where we will discover the **Cathedral** and admire its exquisite vestibules and priceless paintings from the Cusco School of the 17th and 18th centuries. We will continue with a visit to one of the most impressive buildings of Incan Cusco: the **Qoricancha** (the Golden Temple) - a temple dedicated to the worship of the Sun God, whose interior walls were said to have been covered in gold.

DAY 13: SATURDAY, DEC. 3

This morning, we will continue the trip toward the **Sacred Valley**; at 17,40 miles (28 km) away from Cusco, we will find Chinchero village, with an altitude 12,375 feet above sea level (3,772 meters), famous for the extraordinary beauty and quality of its textiles. Walk along its traditional alleyways, next to your guide, and visit the **weavers' workshop of Nilda Callañaupa**, who 28 years

ago decided to bring together like-minded women who shared her passion for weaving, and in time was able to motivate younger women who had lost interest in weaving to learn from their elders and connect once more with this ancestral art. This visit will be greatly enriched with the explanation with the protagonist of this story, Nilda Callañaupa herself.

We will cross the Urubamba River and head towards the **Salt Pans of Maras**. The sight of this still-operating salt mine, in use since Incan times, will amaze you the stark white of the steeply descending salt pans juxtaposed against the green of the surrounding mountain slopes.

The journey will continue until we reach the **archeological site of Moray**. Used as an agricultural testing ground, the site's system of circular terraces descends 490 feet (150 m) from where you will stand, serving as a perfect testament to the level of advancement achieved by the Incas, who excelled at building masterful constructions in harmony with nature.

DAY 14: SUNDAY, DEC. 4

We will pick you up from your hotel at the scheduled time and go to the Ollantaytambo train station. The comfortable Vistadome train ride from there to the station at Aguas Calientes is packed full of spectacular vistas. On our arrival, we will take a bus that will drop us at the admission fee to the citadel of Machu Picchu itself. Unearthed for modernity by Hiram Bingham more than a century ago, Machu Picchu is considered one of the seven wonders of the world. Its architectural beauty, spectacular natural setting, and the energy that radiates from its enigmatic buildings will take your breath away. We will follow in the footsteps of the ancient Incas as we take a tour of the magical citadel led by one of our guides.



Buffet lunch at Tinkuy Restaurant, located in the luxurious [Belmond Sanctuary Lodge](#), feet away from the Citadel.

Return to Aguas Calientes train station to catch the [Vistadome train](#) back to Poroy Station. Transfer to your hotel

DAY 15: MONDAY, DEC. 5

After breakfast, we will set out on a day trip to see some of the sights of Cusco's southern region. After 14 miles (23 km), we will take the turnoff toward the Tipón, an amazing archeological complex of elevated platforms and terraces, where spring waters still flow through the site's impressive system of fountains and aqueducts. Continuing the trip, we will make our way across stunning Andean landscapes filled with quaint, remote villages until we reach to **Andahuaylillas**, a charming little town blessed with a delightfully pleasant climate and one of the most unique churches in the Andes: Saint Peter the Apostle. The church is known as the Sistine Chapel of Peru for the striking beauty of the frescoes that adorn its walls.

From there, it is a short 4 km drive to **Huaro**, a sleepy little town with wonderfully preserved colonial houses. The town's main buildings line its wide square, one of the most important being the Church of Saint John the Baptist, with its prodigious mural art featuring paintings and frescoes, baroque altar and renaissance pulpit.

Return to Cusco.

Lunch at Calle del Medio restaurant.

In the afternoon, private transfer to the airport to take your flight back to Lima, where you can take your connecting flight back home.

Your 14-night tour of Ecuador and Peru has come to an end. If you're ready to start your adventure, book today, spaces are limited!

For a visual itinerary, pricing and inclusions, please visit:

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