

# Ecuador Walking Highlights

Trip Code: ECV

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy some of the best day walks in Ecuador
- Haggle in the famous local markets of Otavalo and Saquisilí
- Visit the high mountain refuges on Cotopaxi, Illiniza and Chimborazo
- Experience the Amazon Rainforest on a day trip from Banos
- See the sights of Quito's Old Town, little known cloud forest reserve, and stand astride the equator at

'Mitad del Mundo'

## AT A GLANCE

- 9 days walking
- Caldera Lakes & Volcanoes
- Markets & Culture
- Max altitude - 5000 metres
- Join at Quito

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

# Introduction

This walking highlights adventure showcases the very best of Ecuador; from its high-altitude volcanoes, unique paramo and cloud forest, vibrant culture and jungle lowlands. During the course of our two week holiday, we explore these highlights with a series of days walks, picturesque transfers and a collection of interesting sightseeing and adventurous experiences along the way.

After visiting the colonial old town of the capital, Quito, we start our journey to the north in the famous market town of Otavalo. As well as exploring its famously colourful textiles market, we complete two stunning day walks to Laguna San Pablo and around the impressive crater rim of Laguna Cuicocha. After this we continue our journey of culture and adventure visiting another renowned market of Saquisilí before hiking to the extremely photogenic caldera lake of Quilotoa.

Continuing South we also visit the high refuges on three of Ecuador's volcanic giants: Cotopaxi, Illiniza and Chimborazo. Cotopaxi (5,897m), recognisable due to its iconic conical shape, is the highest active volcano in the world and the summit of Chimborazo (6,268m), due to the equatorial bulge, has the distinction of being the furthest point from the centre of the Earth!

We end with a unique Amazon experience, heading into the jungle by road and river to learn about the local populations and traditions as well as the abundant flora and fauna of the jungle. We have additional time to relax in the spa town of Banos before heading back to the capital. Here we end the trip with a hidden gem; a day walk through the cloud forest of the Choco Andino Biosphere Reserve - a little known oasis of wildlife and rare flora.

Expect charming accommodation throughout, including incredibly located lodges with outrageous volcanic views, traditional family-run guesthouses and well-located hotels. This is a classic walking holiday and a superb introduction to one of the most awe-inspiring environments on Earth.

Why not combine this trip with a [Galapagos Holiday?](#)

## Is this holiday for you?

During this holiday we will enjoy a total of 9 day walks, spanning the diverse landscapes Ecuador has to offer. We will visit the high mountain refuges on 3 of Ecuador's most impressive volcanoes, Cotopaxi,

Illiniza and the mighty Chimborazo, reaching a top altitude of 5000m. We also trek to volcanic caldera lagoons, through cloud forest reserves and unique Andean Paramo, as well as experiencing the jungle environment of the Amazon. The average walking time each day will be between 3 and 5hrs, but we will be walking at high altitudes, which will of course make things a little more challenging. However, the itinerary is designed with your acclimatisation in mind. We will encounter village tracks, forest roads, Andean Paramo, the occasional rugged slope of scree or loose volcanic material.

Between our walks we'll have time to relax, explore, soak up the Andean ambience and visit some of the country's most famous towns, sights and markets. There are several transfers involved in this holiday. However, Ecuador is the smallest of the Andean countries and these transfers are generally short (1 - 3 hours) and very scenic.

Please note that there is an element of driving on this holiday to enable us to experience the diversity of landscape in this wonderful country.

# Itinerary

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Version:

# Extensions

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When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



## Galapagos Islands Cruise

**Create the perfect holiday-of-a-lifetime by adding an exploratory cruise of the stunning and unique Galapagos Islands**

Needing little in the way of introduction, the Galapagos Islands are one of the most pristine natural environments left on Earth. Over 600 miles separate them from mainland Ecuador, meaning they have enjoyed splendid isolation and provide a habitat for a bewildering array of birds, reptiles, mammals and sea life you simply won't find anywhere else.

We have a variety of ships and itineraries and you can choose from two levels of service - Standard and Upgraded, many of which are more affordable than you may have thought. Itineraries are typically between 7 and 10 days which is the optimum length for visiting this natural paradise. During your cruise you will visit a number of the islands, each distinct and renowned in their own right. Sometimes these will be `dry` landings where you step onto a pier and at others you will make `wet` landings where you reach the island by small inflatable boats and step directly onto the beach. Every boat has a slightly different itinerary but all are focused on seeing as much of the amazing Galapagos wildlife as possible. There is also plenty of time for relaxation and for swimming and snorkelling from the boats. All of our itineraries begin and end in Quito and include the flight out to the islands.

**Please contact us for details on availability, itinerary options and pricing.** *(Sample itinerary detailed below)*

You might also want to consider our 10 day [Galapagos Islands Adventure](#), for a more active and immersive experience of these diverse islands. This shore based trip stays in cosy small hotels and guesthouses, allowing us to experience the beaches and wildlife in the early mornings and evenings when the main tourists have disappeared on their boats. Alternatively, if you are looking for something a more luxurious why not spoil yourself on one of our [Galapagos Cruises aboard the luxury Monserrat Motor Yacht](#).

Book this trip as a stand alone tour or in addition to any of our Latin America holidays.

7 days from  
US\$3,505 per person

# Holiday Information

## What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival & departure
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as per Meal Plan All land transport required by the itinerary
- All activities/excursions mentioned

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips for local staff
- Some meals as per Meal Plan
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Quito.

A single transfer from Quito Airport to the group hotel is provided on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary.

On the last day of the Land Only itinerary, there will be a single transfer to Quito Airport.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If this is not practical, we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also available.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

All breakfasts, 11 lunches and 7 dinners are included in the holiday price. In Quito and the main towns there is a wide range of dining options, to suit all budgets and we find that most people prefer to have a choice on where they eat. We suggest you budget between \$7 and \$20 for each of these non-included meals.

## Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

## Food & Water

### Drinking Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Ecuadorian cuisine varies across its different regions and includes excellent seafood (particularly cerviche style), toasted corn, and empanadas (pastries) stuffed with spiced meats. If you want to fully immerse yourself in the local culture, you can try roasted cuy (guinea pig), but this is strictly optional! You can also expect plenty of exotic fruits and these will be served with most meals. Breakfasts generally consist of fruit, yoghurt, a choice of eggs and toast. Depending on the day's itinerary lunches may be taken in a restaurant or café, or they may be provided as a packed lunch of sandwiches, fruit and snack.

## Accommodation

The group will spend 2 nights in a well located hotel in central Quito, 3 nights in a small family run hotel in Otavalo and 2 nights in a comfortable hotel in Banos. In Machachi we will stay in a characterful local Hostal (guest house). For our night in the Cotopaxi National Park we will stay in a lodge right in the middle of the park, with absolutely stunning views of Cotopaxi. At Chaupi our comfortable lodge is right on the edge of the Illiniza Ecological park and again offers amazing views of the surrounding volcanic peaks. At Quilotoa Lagoon our lodge accommodation will be right on the edge of the lagoon. Our charming hostel in Guamote is run by the Inti Sisa community project, its communal areas are beautifully decorated with pictures of locals, handicraft inspired by and or made by the local community. All accommodation will be on a twin share basis with private facilities. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning on extending your holiday additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

## Altitude

This holiday involves going to high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 3500 metres. This is not something that you should worry about; the human body is quite capable of adapting to a very wide range of altitudes, but it is important that we follow some simple rules in order to acclimatise successfully. Before coming on this holiday you should read the advice on [trekking at high altitude](#). You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude.

## Spending Money

Approximately £150-£200 per person (or equivalent in US dollars or Euros) should be allowed for tips, soft drinks, snacks and miscellaneous expenses. Alcoholic drinks, souvenirs are additional so you may wish to budget for these. It is possible to use credit and bank cards to withdraw local currency from ATMs in Quito, Banos and other major towns.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your leader and local team. Tipping is entirely voluntary and should be dependent on good service. We recommend that you decide levels of tipping and give any tips as a group rather than from individual group members. As a rough guide we suggest that each group member contributing the equivalent £60 to a tipping 'pool' will provide for an adequate level of tips.

## Beat the Jet Lag

Our holidays are normally designed with minimal 'down time' at the start of the trip, but having a day or two at the beginning will have the additional benefit of allowing you time to get over the stress of a long journey or travelling across time zones, leaving you refreshed and ready for your holiday. We can easily arrange for you to have additional nights and airport transfers.

## Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Either a soft duffel bag or luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

## Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

### The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates** (see *Health & Vaccinations below*), **and visas for your holiday**. Please ensure that you check the [FCDO](#) for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH THE USA

If your flights pass through the USA, even if only in transit, you will require either a visa or an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation). Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can apply for an ESTA under certain conditions\*. This must be done online via <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>, no later than 72 hours prior to travel and applies whether entering the country by sea or by air. You will need to have a biometric passport to apply for an ESTA. The fee is currently US\$40 (as of 30/09/25). Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be refused boarding.

\*If you have visited Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen since 2011 or have dual nationality with any of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA. You will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate instead. Additionally, if you have travelled to or have been in Cuba since the 12th of January 2021, you will not be eligible for an ESTA visa waiver and will need to apply for a US visa. You should consult the US State Department website to determine which you will need.

When completing the ESTA application form you will be asked to enter your 'Point of Contact' information. This is not required if you are only transiting through the USA.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH CANADA

UK citizens will require an ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation), and you must get this before boarding any Canada-bound aircraft or ship, or entering on a land border. The fee is CAD\$7 and you should apply for it at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta-start.asp>. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Entry requirements can change regularly so please ensure you have the most up to date information before travelling by checking visa entry requirements at the relevant embassy in your country of residence: (US Embassy in London: <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>)

### Visa Ecuador

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays.

## Currency

The unit of currency in Ecuador is US Dollars.

## Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 4 to 6 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina. There is little you can do to prepare for the altitude but if you have an excellent level of fitness this can help.

## Climate

With the Pacific Ocean to the west and the great basin of the Amazon to the east, Ecuador has a complex pattern of weather. In general the eastern highland region receives the most precipitation. In the Central Highlands it is drier though cloud and rain can and do occur at any time during the year. In general the days are warm with temperatures between 12 and 22°C. Evenings can be chilly in the higher towns with the possibility of night-time temperatures dipping below freezing point once above 3500 metres.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

Ecuador. Lonely Planet guidebook  
Ecuador. Rough Guides

## Maps

### Ecuador. ITMB 1 ; 700,000

Double-sided map dividing the country north/south with a generous overlap. Relief is depicted by altitude tinting and spot heights for peaks and volcanoes. Glaciers, swamp areas, national parks and reserves are marked. Intermediate driving distances are indicated and further symbols depict places of interest, archaeological sites, thermal baths, beaches, etc. Latitude and longitude lines are drawn at 1° intervals. There is an index of place names and the legend is in English and Spanish.

## Private Groups Information

**Make this KE Adventure holiday your own!**

- Do our normal group departure dates not fit?
- Would you prefer to travel with just friends and/or family?
- Are you looking to organise a trip for your local walking, biking or mountaineering club?

It's really easy to make a trip your own. Simply select from our full range of adventure holidays and choose the dates that work for you and your group.

We are experts in creating holidays for groups of friends, families, charities and clubs. Our personal service means you'll be fully involved as we make the arrangements for your perfect adventure holiday.

### Independence with Security

Travelling as a KE Private Group allows you more flexibility and choice, but still with the peace of mind that everything is pre-planned and arranged for your group by a reputable adventure travel company.

To take your first step to an amazing adventure with your friends and family complete the private group enquiry form, or call our **Sales Experts on: 017687 73966**

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

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## Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

### You must bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Socks
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Underwear
- Baselayer shirts
- Casual shirt and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Gloves or mittens
- Headtorch and spare batteries

- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre x2 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small padlock
- Daypack 25 - 30 litres
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, and insect repellent.

**The following items are optional:**

- Trekking poles
- Training shoes or similar
- Shorts
- Gaiters
- Scarf or buff
- Swimwear and towel (for thermal pools)
- Travel clothes
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

## Land Only Information

Please refer to the 'Joining Arrangements & Transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Flights and other transport to your destination should not be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

## Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary, joining at the hotel in Quito. A single transfer is included from/to Quito Airport.

## Flight Inclusive Information

Limited seats are available at the advertised flight price, please book as early as you can. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures and/or upgrades, we will provide you with an alternative quote. It is likely that flight payment will be in advance of your final holiday balance. Booking a flight inclusive package means you will benefit from full financial protection, eases your holiday planning, and leaves us to deal with airlines and schedule changes. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will [offset the carbon of your flight](#).

Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London (Heathrow) to Quito with KLM. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the morning, arriving in the afternoon of the same day (day 1 of the itinerary). Return flights will depart in the afternoon of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK early the following day.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

Our great value Ecuador Walking Highlights holiday offers a perfect blend of walking amongst towering volcanoes, stunning lakes and a rich variety of wildlife. We use a variety of accommodation, from comfortable hotels to mountain lodges with panoramic vistas, to give you a true flavour of Ecuadorian hospitality. To help us see another side of this impressive country we have included an Amazon experience and a stay in Banos.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 04/04/2026 and the trip is subject to change