



SIGNATURE JOURNEY BEST OF QUITO AND NORTHERN ANDES 5 DAYS

Effort: Moderate. Easy.

Activities: Walking, sightseeing, culture learning.

Discover Quito and Ecuador's Northern Andes with our exclusive Signature Journey. We've crafted this itinerary with a high level of personalized options, ranging from close and authentic encounters with local artisans, artists, chefs; to luxury accommodations, superior customer service and private guides. Our culinary experiences range from gourmet and organic, to street and market food. Only in Ecuador you can experience this level of natural and cultural diversity while exploring local markets, immersing in history and culture, enriching your senses through food, learning about ancestral traditions and enjoying world-class trails through stunning landscapes in one of the most diverse regions on earth.

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS:

- Evade the tourist crowds and discover incredible places and live exclusive authentic experiences.
- Enjoying delicious home-cooked meals after a days' excursion at the luxurious Hacienda Zuleta.
- Walk through the truly unique Andean paramo ecosystem.
- Rise early to witness condors flying. Learn about the foundation's reintroduction efforts.
- Get behind-the-scenes and join your chef in searching for local products from traditional markets.
- Farm to Table proposition and an array of foodie encounters: delight in hand-made cheese, organic veggies and freshly brewed ecuadorian coffee.
- Visit and learn from local artisans in their workshops.
- Walk and admire the famous Otavalo Market and leather shops with their unique items.

DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN QUITO

Upon your arrival to Quito’s airport, we transfer you in private transportation to your luxury hotel in Quito. A personal Welcome Kit including program details and a fresh local fruit basket greet you at your hotel.

We spend our first night at Boutique Hotel Plaza Grande, a legendary building of eclectic architecture and the first luxury hotel in Quito. Its privileged location in the main plaza of the historic center offers impressive views of the government palace, The Cathedral, ancient domes of old churches and The Panecillo Hill.

No Meals included.



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DAY 2: QUITO SIGNATURE: TRADITIONAL MARKET, WORKSHOPS & COOKING EXPERIENCE

After a delightful breakfast, we walk through the landmarks of Quito’s colonial, historical downtown, names World Heritage by UNESCO. We meet local artisans and immerse ourselves in the city vibe, visiting the San Francisco market the first, sampling local ingredients and learning about history and Andean healing traditions. If you’re feeling adventurous enough you can venture for a curandera (ancestral physician) healing treatment.

We continue our exploration of the city historical center walking down an area called La Ronda, full of art and ancestral trades, featuring wooden handcrafted toys, pictures painted on dried goatskin, tin objects, ceramics, jewelry, escuela quiteña paintings, wood carving, and sweets shops including exotic and unique ice cream flavors and fine Cacao products.

After awakening our senses, we join our chef for a traditional cooking class that blend contemporary techniques with colonial classic recipes that have endured for centuries in this part of the world. (B, L, D)

Enjoy a delightful dinner at La Belle Epoque at Hotel Plaza Grande.



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DAY 3: QUITO, CUICOCHA NATURE RESERVE, OTAVALO MARKET AND LEATHER SHOPS

An early start takes us north on a beautiful scenic drive to the province of Imbabura, a magical land of lakes and mountains of outstanding beauty. The Northern Sierra offers magnificent scenery of volcanoes, sparkling lakes and patchwork-covered hills.

Our first morning stop is at a local Cayambe bakery for a sampling of their famous biscuits with hot fresh cocoa. After that we continue to Cuicocha, a crater lake collected in a secondary caldera of the extinct Cotacachi Volcano. The lake and surrounding slopes are protected nature reserve. We keep our eyes open for Andean birds while we walk around the crater rim.

We travel on to the indigenous market of Otavalo, famous around the world for their quality weaving. We'll also find an impressive variety of Ecuadorian handicrafts.

We arrive at La Mirage, a beautiful resort and spa where we enjoy an a la carte gourmet lunch. This exquisite spot with its manicured gardens, free strolling peacocks and lovely hummingbirds will delight your senses. After lunch we visit Cotacachi village, famous for its leather shops.

We spend our evening at Hacienda Zuleta, an impressive 4,000 acre (2,000 hectares) colonial working farm belonging to the family of the late Galo Plaza Lasso, former president of Ecuador, for over 100 years. It was chosen as one of the world's "Top Ten Finds" by Outside magazine and named as one of the best Ecuador Hotels by National Geographic Traveler. (B, L, D)



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DAY 4: ANDEAN HACIENDA AND FARM EXPERIENCE

Explore the quaint Zuleta village and discover the Andean farm experience at Hacienda Zuleta, we'll tour the farm's operation, visit their cheese factory to learn about Zuleta's semi-aged, handmade cheese, visit the Hacienda's organic garden where the ingredients for our farm-to-table Hacienda lunch originate. We also visit their shop with local fine handmade jewelry and beautifully embroidered handmade linens.

Guest can also choose a visit to the "Condor Huasi Project" that works on the introduction of the majestic Andean Condor into the wild.

At the end of the day relax we'll cozy up in front of one of the Hacienda's stone fireplaces or relax with an optional Massage session.

Overnight at Hacienda Zuleta

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner



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DAY 5: TRANSFER BACK TO QUITO OR QUITO AIRPORT

INCLUDED

- Boutique Hotel and Luxury Hacienda accommodations
- All meals as per program description
- Soft drinks with all meals and 1 glass of wine with dinners
- Welcome fruit basket and souvenir
- Cooking Class
- Local Sweets and cheese sampling
- Private Top rated bilingual guide
- Comfort private transportation

NOT INCLUDED

- 1st Dinner upon arrival
- Tips, extra alcoholic beverages.



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