

CLASSIC ECUADOR & GALAPAGOS

HIGHLIGHTS

- COLONIAL CITIES HIGH IN THE MOUNTAINS
- LOCAL VILLAGES AND MARKETS
- FASCINATING GALAPAGOS ISLANDS STUDIED BY DARWIN

With its origin in the Inca Empire and the colonial heritage of the Spanish conquistadors, Ecuador has centuries of history. The highlands running through the country are home to the remarkable mountain cities of Quito and Cuenca. The Galapagos Islands are full of rare species for unique wildlife encounters, and you choose the style of vessel you wish to cruise on.

DAY 1

London/Quito

Depart London this morning on a flight via Madrid to Quito. This second highest capital in the world was founded in 1532 by Spanish Conquistador



Sebastian de Benalcázar. Your base is the Plaza Grande in the restored historic heart of the city.

DAY 2

Quito

In Ecuador's fascinating capital religion, the Arts and intellectual

societies flourished under colonial rule for nearly three centuries. Today you can experience this past in the historic centre. Take the chance to stand on the Equator line outside the city. Enjoy lunch overlooking the Pululahua volcanic crater before returning to the Plaza Grande.



DAY 3

Quito/Otavalo/Quito

This full day tour take you north of Quito to an area rich in artisan creativity. The Otavalo market is thousands of years old, famous throughout the Andes for its handicrafts and tapestries. At the home of a traditional musician you will be able to hear music played in locally made instruments. Stop at the town of Cotacachi before returning to Quito.

DAY 4

Quito/Cuenca

Fly south to Cuenca, considered by many Ecuadorians to be the most beautiful city in the country. Visit the flower market and the many monuments, cathedrals and museums that have their own stories to tell. Stay at the Mansion Alcazar, a turn of the century manion in the heart of the colonial city. >



THE A&K DIFFERENCE With our leading reputation and rigorous selection policy, we employ the very best guides who ensure you acquire real insight into their culture and country. Our experienced team of experts, both in the UK and locally, are on hand to provide comprehensive support and ensure complete peace of mind. They anticipate individual needs and provide those extra little touches that make the difference between a good and an exceptional holiday, such as meeting you at the airport, private transfers in air-conditioned vehicles and a ready supply of chilled bottled water. With their unique contacts they can arrange special access to individuals, places and experiences not ordinarily available.

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DAY 5

Cuenca

Enjoy a leisurely day exploring the traditional villages of Gualaceo - in a valley with winding walkways around the riverfront, Paute - on a river of the same name, and Chordeleg - known for its potters, weavers and embroiderers.

DAY 6

Cuenca/Guayaquil

Drive to El Cajas National park, one of Ecuador's natural wonders with glacial lakes,, waterfalls and strange rock formations. On a leisurely walk through the park, observe the numerous species of flora and fauna, before continuing by road to Guayaquil.

DAY 7

Guayaquil/Galapagos Islands

This morning fly to Baltra Island in the Galapagos where you will board the *M/V Eclipse*. This exclusive 64-metre cruise ship carries just 48 passengers but has all the amenities of a larger ship; observation deck, alfresco dining, air-renewal system and infirmary. Enjoy the views from your spacious cabin as you begin your cruise around the islands. Alternatively choose a smaller vessel of around 20 passengers - one of the three ships Eric, Flamingo & Letty that sail in flotilla.



DAYS 8 TO 13

Galapagos Islands

Enjoy six full days exploring these fascinating islands with a naturalist guide on hand to advise and inform you. Most expeditions with your guide are by panga - an inflatable, rubber craft with outboard motor. Snorkels are available to explore the underwater world; a myriad of colourful fish, playful sea lions, dolphins and sunken volcanic craters. Each of the 13 islands and countless smaller islets has a unique ecosystem of its own, studied by Charles Darwin in the 1830s while on the voyage of the *HMS Beagle*. Only here will you see Galapagos penguins, flightless cormorants and marine iguanas, as well as the giant tortoises that give the archipelago its name.



DAY 14

Galapagos/Guayaquil

Depart the Galapagos today to fly to Guayaquil where you will spend your last night at the Hilton Colon.

DAY 15

Guayaquil/London

Spend the last hours of your adventure in Guayaquil, perhaps strolling along the seafront Malecon promenade before your overnight flight via Madrid to London.

With A&K all journeys are individually tailored to suit your interests and timescale. As a guideline, this 15 day journey will cost from £4,995 per person aboard Eric, Flamingo & Letty, or from £5,795 per person aboard *M/V Eclipse*, based on two adults sharing with flights from the UK. *Please bear in mind this is not a prescriptive itinerary but a suggestion to give you a taste of what is possible with the very highest level of comfort, service and convenience. Accordingly, we aim to quote to a standard as opposed to a price.*

Please call **0845 0700 614** to speak to an expert or visit www.abercrombiekent.co.uk