Ecuador: Amazon, Hot Springs & Volcanoes - SEANG

9 days: Quito to Quito

What's Included

- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Otavalo Weaving Lesson, Otavalo
- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Amazon Home Experience, Tena
- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Visit the Omaere Ethnobotanical Park, Baños
- Your Wellness Moment: Papallacta Hot Springs Visit, Papallacta
- Arrival transfer
- Overnight in an historic hacienda
- Explore the Otavalo handicraft market
- Cloud forest reserve visit
- Two nights at an Amazon lodge with jungle excursions
- Excursion to Cotopaxi National Park
- Internal flights
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

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VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2017 and onwards

Itinerary

NOTE: Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

Day 1 Quito

Arrive at any time. Arrival transfer included.

Booking pre- or post-trip accommodation is highly recommended to fully experience the city and take advantage of the optional activities available.

Arrival Day and Welcome Meeting

1h

The adventure begins tonight. Feel free to explore before your welcome meeting, but make sure you're back in time to meet the group. After introductions, your CEO will review the details of your tour. Please note that normal check-in times apply at our start hotels, but you can usually store your luggage for the day if you arrive early.

Private Vehicle

Quito

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Optional Activities - Day 1

Quito City Tour and Equator

Quito

50-60USD per person

Enjoy a city tour of Quito. Visit the Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with stops at the Basilica del Voto Nacional, La Compañía Church, San Francisco Square, Plaza Grande and the Panecillo, a towering statue of the virgin of Quito who looks out over a stunning view of the city. Drive 25km (16 mi) north of Quito to the Middle of the World, latitude 0º. Stand with one foot in each hemisphere.

Mindo Cloud Forest - Full Day Trip
Mindo - Quito
70-100USD per person

Drive northwest for 2 hours, enjoy the dramatic change of vegetation heading down from the Andes into the cloud forest. Mindo is a tiny town set amidst some of the most beautiful and peaceful countryside in the entire country. It is a centre for both nature and adventure activities. Go walking through the cloud forest and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the different waterfalls, take time to ride up the cable car with amazing views. Visit a butterfly farm and see an array of colourful hummingbirds for which Mindo is renowned. In the afternoon, opt for an organic chocolate tour and tasting.

This trip takes roughly 9 hours departing at 7 am, this tour includes a guide and transport only, any activities upon arrival will be additional, lunch is not included.

Teleférico
Quito
8USD per person

Enjoy spectacular views of Quito from this sky tram up Volcán Pichincha. Choose to go for a hike at the top, or just come along for the ride.

Accommodation

Hotel Quito (or similar)
Hotel

Day 2 Quito/Otavalo

Drive to the highlands with a stop at the community of Peguche for a local lunch. Continue to Otavalo and visit the famous handicraft market. Stay the night at a historic highlands hacienda.

Spend a night in the Otavalo area and visit its world famous handicrafts market, the largest in South America. Villagers from the surrounding countryside come here every week to sell handmade goods as well as livestock, fruits, and vegetables.

One of the most obvious signs of the Otavaleños' cultural integrity is their traditional dress. This is not just worn for the tourists at the Saturday market, but is worn throughout their daily life.

Otavalo is famous both for its friendly people and its Saturday animal market. The market dates back to pre-Inca times when jungle products were transported from the eastern lowlands and traded for highland goods. Today's market has two different functions: the local market for buying and selling animals, food, and other essentials, and the crafts market for the tourists and other interested people.

Private Vehicle
Quito - Otavalo2h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Peguche Community Visit
Peguche - Otavalo

Visit the small highlands weaving community of Peguche. Meet locals in this traditional Andean community and enjoy an included lunch.

Otavalo Handicrafts Market Visit
Otavalo

Discover some amazing local art, tapestries, and textiles at Otavalo's famous artisan market, the largest handicraft market in South America. Wander the stalls to meet local artists, and find one-of-a-kind souvenirs. Try to arrive early for the best bargains (it starts at dawn), and try your hand at haggling - it's expected for every purchase. A good negotiator could get at least 20 per cent off the starting price.

Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch

Accommodation

Hotel Pinsaqui (or similar)
Hotel

Day 3 Otavalo/Papallacta

Visit the home and studio of Don Miguel to learn how the Indigenous people of the Otavalo region have used the backstrap loom to create their woven goods. Continue to the Papallacta Hot Springs Resort for a dip in hot springs, optional spa treatments, and hiking excursions. There is plenty of time to soak, relax, and enjoy the mountain views.
Private Vehicle
Otavalo - Papallacta 2h-3h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

**Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Otavalo Weaving Lesson**

Visit the home and studio of Don Miguel, a man working to keep his culture's traditions alive. For thousands of years the indigenous people of the Otavalo region have used the backstrap loom to create their woven goods, however new technologies have slowly been pushing out the tradition. Learn how Don Miguel and his family are working to help revive this ancient art as he demonstrates every step of the process, from cleaning the wool, to naturally dyeing it, to backstrap weaving.

**Your Wellness Moment: Papallacta Hot Springs Visit**

Soak in the natural hot springs the area is known for and let the mineral waters soothe sore muscles. The hot springs vary in temperature, make your way through the circuit with views of the Antisana volcano in the distance.

**Free Time**

Papallacta

Enjoy the afternoon at leisure, as you relax and soak in the natural hot springs.

**Optional Activities - Day 3**

**Hiking Excursion**

Papallacta

Head out to explore. Take a hike or walk in the areas surrounding Papallacta. Enjoy the region's great natural beauty and views of the snow-capped Antisana Volcano.

**Meals included: Breakfast**

**Day 4 Papallacta/Tena**

Visit the Guango private cloud forest reserve for a walk with your CEO to learn about the unique flora and fauna of the region. Enjoy a visit to Misahualli to visit the cheeky Capuchin monkeys who call this town home. Continue to Tena to catch our motorized canoe to the Amazon lodge. Settle in and receive a briefing from a local naturalist guide about the lodge and area. After, embark on a night walk with the naturalist guide to learn about the nocturnal creatures of the Amazon.

The lodge is located along the bank of the Arajuno River approx. 40min. from Tena. We stay in comfortable cabañas next to the river, which have private bathroom with hot water in the rainfall-shower, electricity and a balcony. From your balcony, you can relax in a hammock or deck chair and observe hummingbirds, shore river birds and butterflies. In the evening, listen to the night music of the multitude of frogs and other nocturnal creatures. The Lodge also has an open-air lounge with pool and full service bar, all connected by a raised and roofed boardwalk to guests rooms.

The lodge is dedicated to protecting the pristine jungle environment and has a dedicated recycling program, energy conservation program and offer biodegradable amenities including shampoo and shower gel in the bathrooms.

**Private Vehicle**

Papallacta - Tena 2h-3h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

**Guango Cloud Forest Excursion**

Tena - Papallacta

Enjoy an excursion to Guango private cloud forest reserve. Take a guided walk with our CEO to learn about this unique environment, flora and fauna. A bird lovers paradise, keep your eyes peeled for a variety of parrots, toucans, tanagers and more. We will also enjoy the orchid garden lunch at the lodge and observe a multitude of dive-bombing hummingbirds. Seeing 14 species of hummingbirds within an hour is not uncommon, and the Sword-billed hummingbird with it's unique, long bill is sure to amaze you.

**Amazon Night Walk**

Tena

Embark on a night walk with a local naturalist guide to learn about nocturnal creatures of the Amazon. A flashlight and camera are the most important tools on this excursion, which allows us to hear the nocturnal sounds of the forest and to search out bats, owls, a variety of insects, tarantulas, toads and frogs, and possibly snakes. If the sky is clear, we might have the chance to do some stargazing.
Day 5 Tena

Depart early by canoe to visit a parrot clay lick (Saladero). With our naturalist guide, view parrots and parakeets who gather to eat the mineral-rich clay which helps them digest fruit and seeds. Return to the lodge for breakfast then continue on to visit AmaZOnico, an animal rescue centre that rehabilitates, reintroduces, and cares for animals who are victims of illegal trafficking. Later, enjoy a unique cultural experience at a local family’s home. Meet the family to learn about their traditions and what daily life is like in the Amazon.

AmaZOnico Animal Rescue Centre Visit

Tena 2h-4h

Take a guided tour of AmaZOnico, a rescue and rehabilitation centre that rehabilitates, reintroduces, and cares for animals who are victims of illegal trafficking. See large cats and reptiles up close, and learn all about the important work of this sanctuary.

Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Amazon Home Experience

Enjoy a truly unforgettable cultural experience with a local Ecuadorian family who’ll welcome and host us for the afternoon at their home in the jungle. Discuss their traditions, beliefs, and history and hear about what daily life is like for them in such a unique environment. Go fishing with them and then watch and listen as they prepare lunch and share insight about their deep connection to nature, as well as their thoughts on the encroachment of the modern world on their traditional way of life here. A marvelous afternoon you'll talk about for years to come.

Day 6 Tena/Baños

Depart the Amazon to Baños, a stunning town surrounded by volcanoes. Along the way, visit the Omaere Ethnobotanical Park and discover ethnobotany -- the study of the relationship between cultures and the plants around them.

Baños is one of the most popular spots in the country. Many Ecuadorian families vacation here. One look at this delightfully green mountain town and you will know why. Baños means “baths” and this is precisely what the town is famous for. Some are thermal springs from the base of Tungurahua Volcano, which means “little hell” in Quichua. Other baths have melt water running into them from Tungurahua's glaciated flanks. Locals swear that the baths are good for your health; it’s definitely worth rising early to watch the dawn creep over the mountains from a hot spring vantage point.

Private Vehicle

Tena - Baños 2h-3h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Visit the Omaere Ethnobotanical Park

Visit the Omaere Ethnobotanical Park and discover ethnobotany - the study of the relationship between cultures and the plants around them. Plants are integral to the lives of Amazonian indigenous groups who use them for shelter, nourishment, medicine, and in spiritual practices. Set out on the trails with an expert guide to learn about the diverse plant life and the local Shuar and Waorani people, and enjoy unique botanical experiences like tasting cinnamon and being painted with Achotillo sap.

Free Time

Baños

Opt to take a walk through town and visit some shops.

Optional Activities - Day 6

Horseback Riding

Baños

25USD per person
Hop in the saddle and explore Baños' beautiful countryside by horseback. Check out the unique vegetation in the region, and, perhaps, trot over to Tungurahua Volcano for amazing views.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation

Hotel Sangay (or similar)

Hotel

Day 7 Baños

Free day to explore Baños where there are numerous optional activities such as hiking, horseback riding, visits to hot springs, and mountain biking.

The town is the perfect setting for outdoor pursuits. Activities include horseback riding, canyoneering, hiking, mountain biking, climbing, and rafting on the River Patate.

Free Time

Baños

Relax at leisure or opt to take part in some active pursuits.

Optional Activities - Day 7

Hiking

Baños

Free

Head to the mountains for some amazing treks; Baños provides the perfect natural setting for outdoor adventure.

Hot Springs

Baños

20USD per person

Soak weary muscles in the thermal baths that Baños is famous for. Head to hot springs at the base of Tungurahua Volcano, which means "little hell" in Quichua, or try some of the baths fed by the melt waters of Tungurahua's glaciated flanks. Rise before the sun for an early soak - watching the sun peak over the mountains while relaxing in the warm waters is definitely worth the early start.

Mountain Biking

Baños

10USD per person

Hop on your bike and explore the amazing scenery surrounding Baños. Pass by mountains, rivers, waterfalls, and changing vegetation - depending on what path you take. Enjoy the cool wind on downhill stretches, but be sure to bring sunblock; the sun can be strong.

Horseback Riding

Baños

25USD per person

Hop in the saddle and explore Baños' beautiful countryside by horseback. Check out the unique vegetation in the region, and, perhaps, trot over to Tungurahua Volcano for amazing views.

Baños Canyoning Adventure

Baños

30USD per person

Jump, slide, rappel, swim and float your way down the Rio Blanco on this canyoning adventure. Make your way down stream and enjoy the stunning scenery as you head into the heart of Llanganates National Park.

Baños Ziplining Adventure Bundle

Baños

25USD per person
Buckle up your harness, put on your helmet, and prepare to launch. Glide along a zipline suspended 850m above the canyon below, dare to let go and reach top speeds as you zip past stunning scenery. Forget your fear as you cross the Tibetano Suspension Bridge above Pastaza River. Rock climb up to a second zipline to finish off this adrenaline-filled adventure.

Whitewater Rafting
Baños
70USD per person

Hit the rapids in the adrenaline capital of Ecuador. Choose a river that suits your experience level; there a number with varying ranges of difficulty. Enjoy amazing Andean scenery and a fun-filled ride!

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation

Hotel Sangay (or similar)

Hotel

Day 8 Baños/Quito

Drive back to Quito along the scenic Avenue of Volcanoes with a visit to Cotopaxi National Park en route. Enjoy stunning views of the perfectly shaped volcano (it's one of the highest active volcanoes in the world).

Cotopaxi National Park Visit

Cotopaxi National Park

Visit Cotopaxi National Park, home to Cotopaxi Volcano, which stands at 5,897m (19,342 ft). The beautiful cone-shaped, snow-covered volcano is Ecuador's second highest peak and the highest active volcano in the world. Keep an eye out for park wildlife, including condors, foxes, deer, spectacled bears, and more. For those who want to hike, there are options available (weather permitting). Please ensure you have proper hiking shoes or boots, a waterproof/windproof jacket and warm hats and gloves. Hike is approximately 1.5 hours.

Private Vehicle

Baños - Quito7h-9h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation

Hotel Quito (or similar)

Hotel

Day 9 Quito

Depart at any time.

Departure Day

Not ready to leave? Your CEO can help with travel arrangements to extend your adventure.

Optional Activities - Day 9

Quito City Tour and Equator

Quito
50-60USD per person

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Highlights

Visit the Otavalo Weaving studio and get a lesson from Miguel Andrango, explore villages and learn about traditional handicrafts and folk art from locals, traverse the Amazon jungle with a local naturalist guide, learn about the relationship between cultures and the plants around them at the Omaere Ethnobotanical Park, be surrounded by towering volcanoes

Dossier Disclaimer

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Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

Important Notes

1. THE TUNGURAHUA VOLCANO
Please note this tour travels to Banos. The Tungurahua volcano in the area around Banos is constantly active. G Adventures have operated countless tours to the Banos area over the years without incident. However, we are obligated to point out that travel to the area is at your own risk, to exercise caution when travelling in the area. Further, we urge you to check your insurance coverage with your insurance provider prior to travel to the Banos area.

2. All travellers are required to pay the tax on domestic flights in Ecuador. Foreign travellers are exempt form this, and proving you are indeed a foreign traveller can be done by providing us with your international ticket number (ITN). Travellers who do not submit international ticket numbers at least 30 days prior to Day 1 of their tour will be required to pay the domestic tax on all included flights.

Group Leader Description

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders, also known as a CEO (Chief Experience Officer). The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting- we think it's the best of both worlds.
Group Size Notes

Max 16, Avg 10

Meals Included

8 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners

Meals

Eating is a big part of traveling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

Transport

Private van, motorized canoe, walking.

Local Flights

Airline luggage restriction for flying to the Amazon Lodge:
Each passenger is allowed luggage up to 20 kilos (44 pounds) for checked luggage, as well as a carry-on item such as a backpack.

Solo Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Accommodation

Hotels (4 nts), historic hacienda (1 nt), jungle lodge (2 nts), hot springs resort (1 nt).

My Own Room

Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops

About Accommodation

On our Ecuador trip we use various different types of accommodations that are unique to the various environments experienced on this trip. From an historic hacienda in the highlands to a hot springs resort at Papallacta, these are wonderful places to stay.

Joining Hotel

For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

Joining Instructions

An arrival transfer is included when you arrive on Day 1, or if you arrive up to three days prior provided that you have booked your pre-accommodation through National Geographic Journeys in our joining hotel. Due to customer experience and quality considerations, all services related to the tour must be continuous.

Our driver will be waiting for you with a National Geographic Journeys sign with your name on it, and they will be waiting for you outside the luggage hall. There most likely will be many signs, so please check carefully for your name.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned, so you may arrive at any time. Similarly the last day is a departure day in which no activities are planned.

Your CEO will contact you at the hotel on Day 1 and make sure you are settled comfortably. If you arrive late, they will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning. Your CEO will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip.

Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact
details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

AIRPORT TRANSFER

If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Office Quito, Ecuador
During office hours (Weekdays 9am-6pm Local Time)
From outside Ecuador: +593 2250 6610
From within Ecuador: 022 506 610

After hours Emergency number
From outside Ecuador: +593 999 506 000
From within Ecuador: 0999 506 000

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below, which will connect you directly with our 24 hour Sales team, who will happily assist you.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100
Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000
Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000
Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618
Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

What to Take

Most people automatically assume that the weather is hot in South America, but because of the higher altitude in the Andes, the temperature can feel quite cold, especially at night. We recommend the use of a medium sized soft suitcase, duffel bag or backpack, whichever is easiest for you to carry. A good size daypack is also essential.

Rubber boots are very good for hiking in the rainforest, they help protect feet from plants and insects close to the ground as well as deep water. The lodge offers use of boots as a courtesy to our guests, available from size 5 to size 12.

How to keep things dry: We recommend that passengers bring zip-lock plastic bags or dry sacks for your lenses and camera equipment. A waterproof backpack will also help you to protect your camera gear or anything else you wish to keep completely dry. The humidity is high in the rainforest, however, if you follow the advice about packing appropriate belongings it should not be an issue.

Packing List

Amazon:
* Knee-length socks
* Loose-fitting, light coloured hiking pants
* Loose-fitting, light coloured long-sleeved shirts
* Pack liners to waterproof bags

Documents:
* Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
* Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
* Passport (required) (With photocopies)
* Required visas or vaccination certificates (required) (With photocopies)
* Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)

Essentials:
* Binoculars (optional)
* Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
* Cash, credit and debit cards
* Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
* Ear plugs
* First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
* Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
* Fleece top/sweater
* Footwear
* Hat
* Locks for bags
* Long pants/jeans
* Moneybelt
* Outlet adapter
* Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
* Reusable water bottle
* Shirts/t-shirts
* Sleepwear
* Small travel towel
* Sunglasses
* Toiletries (Preferably biodegradable)
* Watch and alarm clock
* Waterproof backpack cover
* Windproof rain jacket

Smart Dress:
* Smart outfit (For evenings out)

Warm Weather:
* Sandals/flip-flops
* Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
* Sun hat/bandana
* Swimwear

** Laundry**

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

**Visas and Entry Requirements**

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy, or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent.

** Please note that by February 2nd 2018, it will be mandatory for every traveler to show proof of insurance (covering medical, accident, death) to the immigration authority at the airport or border crossing into Ecuador. This insurance must cover the traveler for their entire length of stay in the country.

If you do not carry proof of insurance and/or an insurance assistance card that satisfies this requirement, it is possible that your entrance into Ecuador could be denied.

**Detailed Trip Notes**

Important notes about visiting the Amazon:

**How to keep things dry:**

We recommend that passengers bring zip-lock plastic bags or dry sacks for your lenses and camera equipment. A waterproof backpack will also help you to protect your camera gear or anything else you wish to keep completely dry. The humidity is high in the rainforest, however, if you follow the advice about packing appropriate belongings it should not be an issue.

**The weather in the Amazon:**

Year-round temperature average is 82°F (28°C), nights can be cooler. Since Ecuador is located right on the equator, the country does not experience extreme weather changes, and the weather is surprisingly comfortable all year around. Please be prepared for rain.

Digital camera users need only beware (as SLR users) that moisture can fog their lenses rapidly. Silica gel in the camera carrying case should do the job and remember to put your camera back in the case when not using it. Bring plastic zip-lock bags for protecting your gear.

**Spending Money**

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.
Money Exchange

Credit cards and debit cards are very useful for cash advances. Visa cards are the most widely accepted cards. While ATMs are widely available some may not accept all international credit or debit cards. You may need to try at more than one machine if the first does not accept your card. You should also check with your bank before leaving to ensure that your card works internationally. You should be aware that to purchase products or services on a credit card a fee of 5%-10% usually applies. Do not rely on credit or debit cards as your only source of money. A combination of US dollar cash and cards is best. Always take more rather than less, as you don't want to spoil the trip by constantly feeling short of funds. Please bring USD banknotes in denominations smaller than 100, as they can be hard to exchange in Ecuador. 100 dollar bills of certain series (e.g. CB B2) can be especially hard to cash! CURRENCY EXCHANGE TIP: Please be advised that slightly torn notes, notes that have been heavily marked or are faded may be difficult to exchange. It is best to bring notes in fairly good condition, in denominations lower than $100 USD (or equivalent). As currency exchange rates can fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: www.xe.com

Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD $200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Tipping

It is customary in Latin America to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is an expected - though not compulsory - component of your tour program and an expression of satisfaction with the persons who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from $5-10 USD per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture.

Also at the end of each trip if you felt your Discovery Adventures CEO did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline $20-25 USD per person, per week can be used.

Optional Activities

Quito
- Teleférico (8USD per person)
- Quito City Tour and Equator (50-60USD per person)

Mindo
- Mindo Cloud Forest - Full Day Trip (70-100USD per person)

Papallacta
- Hiking Excursion

Baños
- Horseback Riding (25USD per person)
- Baños Ziplining Adventure Bundle (25USD per person)
- Hot Springs (20USD per person)
- Hiking (Free)
- Mountain Biking (10USD per person)
- Whitewater Rafting (70USD per person)
- Baños Canyoning Adventure (30USD per person)

Health

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes, as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that quite often we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. Discovery Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our CEO they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

Please note your Adventure travels to high altitude, in Quito and the highlands. This is medically defined as anything over 8,000 feet (2,440 meters). Most people can travel to 8,000 feet with minimal effects. However, everyone reacts to altitude differently and altitude sickness can on set with some people irrespective of fitness and age. For details on how to best prepare and what to do in the unlikely event you are effected on your Adventure, please consult your physician.

Safety and Security
Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government’s advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers’ cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

Trip Specific Safety

Please take care when wandering about the city on your own, as pick pockets and purse-snatchers are common, particularly in the Old Town. Be safe and leave your passport, credit cards, traveller's cheques and cash you don't need in the hotel's safety deposit box. Most Quiteños are honest and genuinely helpful and friendly, but be safe and enjoy the city!

A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

The Planeterra Foundation planeterra.org is a Canadian non-profit organization that helps empower local people to develop their communities, conserve their cultures, and create humane and supportive systems for their endeavours. Planeterra provides capacity building and catalyst grants to get community social enterprises off the ground. These businesses address local challenges by providing benefits for indigenous people, empowering marginalized women, and granting disadvantaged youth access to education, employment, and brighter futures. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating programs into G Adventures’ itineraries globally.

G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

Dollar-a-Day Program

G Adventures' Dollar-a-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar for every day you are on trip. 100% of these donations go directly to support community development projects worldwide that are implemented by Planeterra.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that we’ll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at customerservice@gadventures.com and we will send it
on to you.

**Newsletter**

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at [www.gadventures.com/newsletters/](http://www.gadventures.com/newsletters/).

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation - Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](http://planeterra.org/monthly-news) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

**Minimum Age**

You must be 18 to travel unaccompanied on a G Adventures tour. For minors travelling with a guardian over 21 years old, the minimum age is 12.

**International Flights**

Check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.