



*Explore*

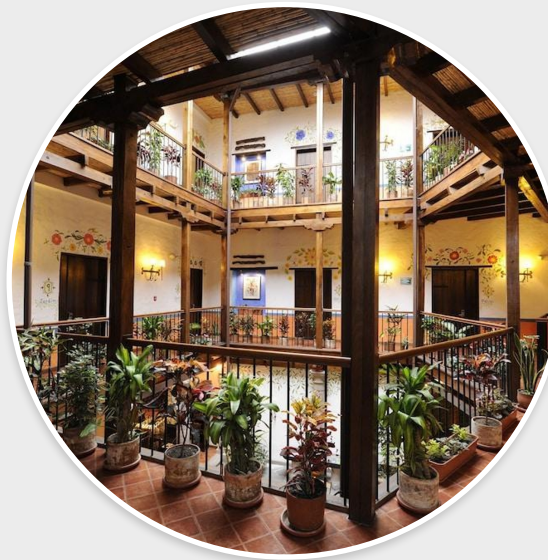
AMAZING PLACES

**HACIENDAS & INCA MARKETS  
OF ECUADOR**

**(with optional add-on)**

**DARWIN'S GALAPAGOS ISLANDS**

**January 8-22, 2023**



## DARWIN'S GALÁPAGOS ADD-ON (OPTIONAL)

JANUARY 8 – 13, 2023

### Day 1

#### SUNDAY, JANUARY 8TH ARRIVE IN QUITO

Arrive at Quito's Mariscal Sucre International Airport. Explore Amazing Places staff will be there to welcome you and escort you to our hotel in Quito.

#### **Accommodation: La Casona De La Ronda**

You'll be met and taken to La Casona De La Ronda. The moment you enter through the main wooden doors...you also enter into Ecuadorian history. This unique Heritage Boutique Hotel is located in one of the oldest Spanish houses called "Las Corralas" originally built in 1738, now a part of the Quito Historic Center.

# Day 2

## MONDAY, JANUARY 9TH: FLIGHT TO GALÁPAGOS

### **Baltra Airport and Santa Cruz Island**

After landing at Baltra Airport, we drive to the Itabaca Channel to take a ferry across to Santa Cruz Island. A 30-minute bus ride takes us up to the fascinating, more humid Highlands of the island where we'll learn about its unique ecosystems and biodiversity. Lunch will be served at a local restaurant.

Note: Please dress with comfortable shoes and clothes, bring a small backpack with any medicine you might be taken, sunblock, insect repellent, and anything you need during the excursion. You'll go onboard Yacht Isabela II at the end of the day.

### **Santa Cruz Island's Highlands and Puerto Ayora**

After lunch, we drive to a nearby reserve that is one of the best places in the archipelago to see giant tortoises in their natural habitat. The tortoises are easy to spot, lumbering around, munching on grass and leaves, and wallowing in small pools. There are several lava tunnels to explore in the reserve, too. A short bus ride takes us down to Puerto Ayora to board the Isabela II.



## Day 3

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10TH: GALÁPAGOS

### **Puerto Egas (Santiago Island)**

Following a wet landing on the black, sandy beach, our trail takes us to enjoy close-up encounters with recently reintroduced land iguanas, plus land and marine birds amid a landscape of tuff-stone offers excellent swimming and snorkeling opportunities amid white-tipped reef sharks and Galapagos penguins

## Day 4

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11TH: GALÁPAGOS

### **Prince Philip's Steps (Genovesa Island)**

The day kicks off with a panga ride along the cliffs of "Bird Island" as Genovesa is affectionately nicknamed, followed by a landing at a steep staircase that connects us with a flat plateau. From here, the trail winds its way through large colonies of Nazca boobies, red-footed boobies, great frigatebirds, and storm petrels. With luck, we'll be able to spot the short-eared owl. Those who do not wish to disembark can enjoy a longer panga (inflatable dinghy) ride along the cliffs, weather conditions permitting. Snorkeling and kayaking activities are available.

### **Darwin Bay (Genovesa Island)**

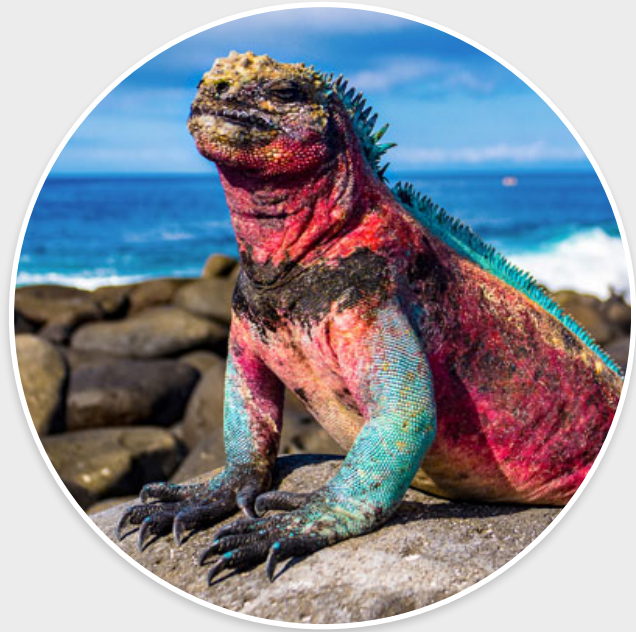
We land after lunch at the beautiful white beach of Darwin Bay. Here we walk amid literally hundreds of birds, most of which are frigate birds, red-footed and Nazca boobies, as well as gulls, herons, finches, and mockingbirds.

# Day 5

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12TH: GALÁPAGOS

SANTA FE ISLAND - We take the dinghy over to this idyllic sandy-white beach populated by colonies of sea lions. The Santa Fe land iguana may be spotted during our exploration. Following the walk, we can snorkel and swim along a natural wave barrier or ride the glass-bottom boat.

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND - In the afternoon, we make our way around to the northern coast of Santa Cruz Island to the eastern mouth of the Itabaca Channel. If we are lucky, we will come across playful sea lions & various reef fish.



# Day 6

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13TH: GALÁPAGOS

BALTRA ISLAND - Our journey ends at Baltra Island where we transfer to the airport to take the flight back to Quito on the mainland of Ecuador.



# HACIENDAS & INCA MARKETS OF ECUADOR

JANUARY 13 – 22, 2023

If you are looking to take in the breathtaking Andes scenery, experience the Ecuadorian culture, and spend your nights in traditional haciendas along the way, this is the perfect trip for you!

## Day 1

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13TH: QUITO

Arrive at Quito's Mariscal Sucre International Airport from home or the Galápagos Islands.

This journey takes us to the finest haciendas in Ecuador, transporting us into another time while offering the highest quality comforts and luxury designed to forget the daily worries and liberate the stress caused by the times we have been living in.





## HACIENDA LA COMPAÑIA AND ROSE PLANTATION

Accompanied by Explore Amazing Places staff and a local guide with in-depth knowledge of the visited areas, this travel adventure begins with a stop along our route to enjoy a typical Ecuadorian lunch at a private hacienda, La Compañía de Jesus, which over 300 years ago, belonged to the Jesuit order. The house and chapel have been in the hands of the Jarrín family for over 100 years. The charm of the French style home, and the fact that it is decorated with thousands of roses, which are brought from the rose farm belonging to the same family, makes this a memorable occasion.



## HACIENDA CUSIN

Arrive at Hacienda Cusin, a restored 17th century Andean estate, now a charming and comfortable, country inn furnished with colonial antiques, tapestries, and Andean crafts. Located in the Imbabura province of the Northern Andes, the hacienda is the oldest in the country. Ancient stone walls topped with moss encircle two acres of gardens which attract over 50 species of birds. With its roaring fires, sumptuous tapestries, louche saints and antiques, the restored 19th-century former home of a successful hacienda owner is itself a collection of the culture, art and people of the Andes. The history of this Otavalo hacienda is faithfully revered yet playfully reimagined with mischievous touches; look closely and you'll find a Beatrix Potter garden cottage, a Bond villain's secret door, and politicians painted into an indigenous mural.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a market stall. It is densely packed with various colorful textiles, including shawls, ponchos, and blankets. The colors are bright and varied, featuring patterns of stripes, floral motifs, and geometric designs. The stall appears to be outdoors, with some items hanging from the top. The overall atmosphere is one of a busy, traditional market.

## Day 2

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 14TH: OTAVALO INCA MARKET

After breakfast we will travel 20 minutes to the Otavalo indigenous market, the most famous market in Ecuador. Indigenous people arrive at dawn by the mountain trails surrounding the city from nearby villages and towns to sell their products woven on back strap and Spanish treadle looms. Other crafts of the area include felt hats, knit sweaters, straw products, wood carvings and many other treasures for you to take home. The market is also a good place to buy an authentic Panama (made in Ecuador) Hat, spending as little as \$6 or as much as you want, depending on the quality.

Otavaleños are a special case among indigenous groups. Their financial success and cultural stability have allowed them to travel and educate their children abroad while still keeping a firm hold on their traditions at home. The typical dress of both the men and women make Otavaleños easily recognizable. Women traditionally wear elaborately embroidered white blouse over double layered wool skirts, white underneath and blue or black on top.

Shawls protect from the sun, keep them warm at night, or carry a baby. Necklaces of gold metal or red beads (once coral, now usually colored glass or plastic) are worn around the neck, and their long, black hair is tied back in a single braid and wrapped in a woven faja (hair ribbon). Men also wear their long, black hair braided in a shimba, often to the waist. The long hair is such an important symbol of ethnic identity that indigenous of any tribe are not required to cut it off when they enter the army. Blue wool ponchos are worn in all types of weather over white calf-length pants and rope sandals. A straight-brimmed felt fedora tops it off.

Most important, and unusual, Otavaleño weavers have been able to organize themselves efficiently, enabling them to hold onto their roots while keeping their business feet firmly in the present. They travel extensively abroad to sell their products in America, Europe, and Asia.





# Day 3

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 15TH: COTACACHI (LEATHER TOWN) and HACIENDA PENSIQUI

After a leisurely breakfast, spend the morning hiking, bird watching, or go on a cabalgato (horseback riding - optional). In the afternoon, we will visit the village of Cotacachi specializing in leatherwork where it is so important that Cotacachi is the home of the only high school in Ecuador that teaches leatherwork. Great shopping!

As evening approaches, we will head to the historic Hacienda Pinsaquí where an Andean band will entertain us in the cellar bar while we enjoy traditional appetizers and a canelazo, which is a fragrant brew of cinnamon and naranjilla (bitter orange). Dine in the main dining room where local cuisine is the specialty.

# Day 4

## MONDAY, JANUARY 16TH: HACIENDA CUSIN

After breakfast you may spend the day relaxing, getting a massage, exploring the many details of the hacienda such as: five acres of beautifully landscaped gardens, where the myriad plants and flowers – bougainvillea, jasmine, agapanthus, hydrangeas, begonias, poppies, geraniums, dahlias, primroses, orchids, magnolia, Aztec lilies growing and flowering throughout the year. Take well maintained bikes out for a spin to appreciate the area from ground level, over short or long trails, Popular cooking classes can be arranged with the talented team of chefs. Bird watch with more than 50 species of birds at the Hacienda.

Or, curl up by a crackling fireplace with a good book or magazine, paint in the gardens, write at the great inspiring desks of the library, delving into the 300-strong film library, find your way to spend a perfect day.





## Day 5

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 17TH: HACIENDA LA ALEGRIA MITAD DEL MUNDO (MIDDLE OF THE EARTH)

Say goodbye to Hacienda Cusin and head to the Middle of the Earth (Mitad Del Mundo) at latitude 00.00, longitude 00.00. Put one foot in the Northern Hemisphere and one foot in the Southern Hemisphere at the same time.

Next, travel south on Ecuador's Avenue of the Volcanoes, enjoying magnificent scenery of volcanoes in a valley that runs through the Andes mountain chain, arriving at the fascinating Hacienda La Alegria. Known for their warm hospitality, this charming family-owned, working hacienda offers a unique Ecuadorian experience combining local culture of working "Chagras" (Ecuadorian cowboys), history, and scenic landscapes. Prepare yourself for a unique experience!



# Day 6

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18TH: HACIENDA LA ALEGRIA

Awaken to a sunrise and enjoy the breathtaking views across the valley to the extinct volcanoes of Ruminahui, Pasochoa, Atacazo, and in the distance the mighty cone of Cotopaxi, at 5897m, the highest active volcano in the world.

We will begin the morning with the Chagras (Ecuadorian Cowboys) as they reveal life in the day of working on the hacienda and in the mountains of beautiful Ecuador. A special hacienda midday Barbecue (in place of dinner) with the Chagras. The rest of the afternoon is free for art, hiking, exploring the hacienda, birding or horseback riding (optional) which is the specialty of the hacienda. A hot bowl of soup from Paty's kitchen, coffee, tea and snacks this evening.

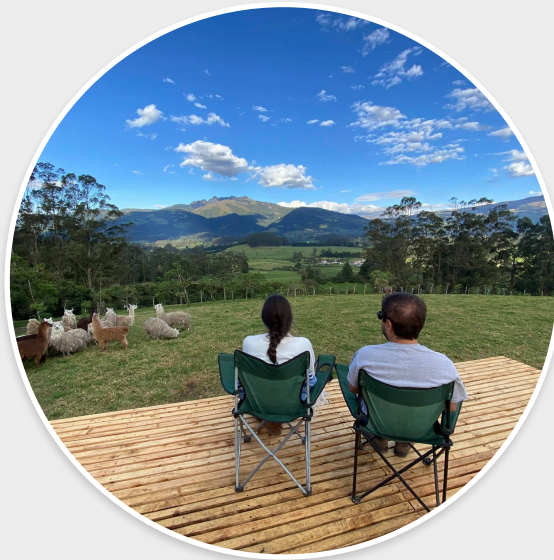
# Day 7

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 19TH: HACIENDA LA ALEGRIA

This hacienda specializes in horseback riding vacations, so you'll have a unique opportunity to ride with the Chagras on surrounding trails and/or take riding lessons, or visit the Cloud Forest with a trail of wild orchids, (flexible optional activities). These luxuriant forests rank among some of the most bio-diverse habitats on the planet, with an astonishingly profusion of plant life. Another option is an Ecuadorian cooking class with proprietress Paty who will teach you the secret of making the favorite soup of the Andes – Locro, (Cooking class included); relax and explore the beautiful hacienda grounds for some great photo opportunities.

Social Hour in the living room before dinner.





## Day 8

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 20TH: HACIENDA LA ALEGRIA

Wake up with the horses this morning and enjoy a hearty hacienda breakfast. This will be a morning to paint. After lunch, say adios to Hacienda La Alegria with hugs all around and good wishes to owners Gabriel and Paty. Then, we travel to Quito and the Hotel La Casona De La Ronda.

## Day 9

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 21ST: CASONA DE LA RONDA

We begin our day with a walking tour of Old City, the first city to be named a UNESCO World Heritage site, and today beautifully restored. Starting with Plaza de la Independencia, located in the heart of the Old City, this busy plaza honors those heroes who started the movement toward independence from Spain.

We'll visit the most magnificent Church in the Americas, La Compañía. Then, shopping at Tianguuez, specializing in "Panama" hats (all Panama hats are made in Ecuador), and the famous jewelry of the indigenous designer Byron Ugshina. This shop is located in the cavern like catacombs of the Church San Francisco Established in 1536 by Franciscan Monks, this magnificent architectural masterpiece features a museum in its convent with art from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

We'll lunch at an environment unique in its panoramic view of the San Franciscan Plaza and the domes of the Compañía de Jesús Church, You'll savor delicious plates of Ecuadorian cuisine. The culinary traditions of the Andes, Coast, and Amazon all form a part of the menu. Many diverse options, made with corn, seafood, root vegetables, and tropical fruits are available.





# Day 10

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 22ND: CASONA DE LA RONDA

All good things must come to an end (until the next one). Time to say adios to Ecuador and head to the airport for flights home.

- The itinerary is carefully planned but subject to minor changes to take advantage of new travel opportunities.

### Included in your Tour:

- in your Ecuador Art Workshop Tour: ■ 10 days, 9 nights at unique hotels ■ meals per itinerary, including gratuities ■ hotel baggage handling and driver gratuities ■ deluxe motor coaches, including driver tips

### NOT Included:

- Airfare from your hometown to Quito, Ecuador ■ Airport baggage handling tips (we recommend \$1 per bag) ■ Alcoholic beverages and tips for alcoholic beverages (10%) ■ Any Airport Security Taxes ■ Any expenses incurred should you choose to deviate from the itinerary ■ Optional Activities ■ Guide tip (we recommend \$2 - \$5 per day, per person)

### HACIENDA & INCA MARKETS

**COST:\$3,650    SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:\$460**

### GALAPAGOS ADD-ON

**COST:\$5,275.    SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:\$725**  
*(only 5 single rooms available at this price.)*