

# *Celebration* · ESCAPES ·

— TRANSFORMING DREAMS INTO MEMORIES —

## 7 Day Ecuador Adventure – Experience The Spirit Of The Andes



### **CUSTOM ITINERARY – YOUR FLEXIBLE INCLUSIONS DATES – 7-10 DAY ITINERARY**

Ecuador's largest tour operator with nearly 60 years' experience, has launched a new itinerary through the Ecuadorian Andes which includes the famous "Devil's Nose" section of track - one of the most difficult engineering feats in history and one of the most dramatic railways in the world.

The "Spirit of the Andes" promises a 4-day/3-night journey to the heart of the Andean world, through the region's history, spirituality, cuisine, customs, traditions and legends.

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The inspiring scenery of the Ecuadorian Andes, including the highland moorlands of Cotopaxi National Park and visits to 300-year old haciendas, is now complete with the addition of the thrilling train ride along the famous zigzag of the Devil's Nose.

The Ecuadorian Railways Company (FDE) has invested millions of dollars in track, rolling stock and station infrastructure over the last years, making the experience of riding the rails in Ecuador a fun, safe and exciting experience for all ages and nationalities.



Celebration Escapes and Metropolitan Touring is delighted to be able to include various rides on the rails in their portfolio of tours. These include the Spirit of the Andes and Quito to Cotopaxi National Park. We know how popular the train is with our guests and we are sure they will enjoy the rejuvenated and modernised experience we can now offer in Ecuador."

Guests board the train on day three of their journey. Before that, they visit the Cotopaxi National Park, lunching in a historic hacienda, visit a rose farm and overnight near the Tungurahua Volcano. The next day, they pass through the friendly town of Baños and nearby roaring waterfalls, then coil up the Andes to where herds of wild vicuñas roam at the foot of imposing Chimborazo Volcano.



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Following the train ride, guests wind south through fertile hills and mountains to explore the Inca ruins of Ingapirca, and arrive at Cuenca, Ecuador's most beautiful city and a World Cultural Heritage Site. The fourth day is spent discovering the charms of Cuenca with its rivers, churches, museums, squares, courteous citizens and (misnamed) Panama hat workshops.

Celebration Escapes and Metropolitan Touring endeavors to ensure all their trips have a positive impact on the places their guests visit, as well as contributing to environmental conservation efforts. Our programs in the Andes support rural tourism through entrance fees and our promotional efforts worldwide.

Spirit of the Andes programs are offered on private or shared basis, with itineraries of four or three days.

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## 7 Day Itinerary: Ecuador; Quito – Patate – Riobamba - Cuenca



Day 1 Arrival Ecuador: **Quito**

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**Upon arrival in Quito**, you will be met by our Guest Relations Expert to assist you with traversing immigration and customs, and forward through the airport to the baggage claim area where you will be met by your private English-speaking Driver who will transfer you to your hotel.

**Upon arrival at the hotel**, you will receive a Welcome and a private VIP check-in experience. Your luggage will be managed and delivered to you accommodation.



The remainder of the day is at leisure for you to relax, enjoy the spa, or do a little exploring on your own.

**Lunch & Dinner this evening are on your own.** See Celebration Escapes' Restaurant Collection for recommendations for dining in Quito.

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## Day 2 Ecuador: Quito – Cotopaxi National Park – Hacienda San Agustin de Callo - Patate

### Breakfast in the hotel.

**After breakfast,** Meet your group in the lobby of the hotel to begin your small group journey. A four-day immersion in the Andean World, from Quito, along the Avenue of the Volcanoes to Cuenca, through the spectacular scenery of the Andes, with visits to centenary Haciendas, fertile fields of vegetables and roses, in close contact with the local culture. This is a journey along the history, spirituality, flavours, customs, traditions and legends of the Andean Region.

Early departure from Quito by motorcar on the Pan-American Highway to the south, to visit the Cotopaxi National Park, an ecological sanctuary of 88,920 acres, around the magnificent Cotopaxi Volcano, which rises 5897 meters (19,347 feet) above sea level.

The evergreen landscape of the Ecuadorian highlands is one of the main attractions, along valleys and mountains covered by multicolored fields.

After an hour and a half, the entrance to the park is reached and then it's up a dirt road for approximately one hour.

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**Upon arrival to the park there is an introductory briefing** about the habitat of the Andean paramo or moorlands, its flora and fauna in the small Interpretation Center.

Travel along valleys and mountains, arrive to Cotopaxi National Park, which surrounds the magnificent Cotopaxi Volcano, for an up-close view of the Andean paramo habitat and its unique flora and fauna; a number of high-altitude birds can be observed around Limpiopungo Lagoon, and occasionally, wild horses.

On clear days, the perfect snow-capped cone of the Cotopaxi Volcano is quite a sight! At the foot of the volcano lies a charming hacienda, where lunch is served in a dining room of Inca walls, perfectly preserved through the centuries -a true archaeological jewel.

**After lunch**, mingle with the llamas of the hacienda and stroll along a rose plantation, many varieties, many colours, ready for exportation.



From here, descend towards the town of Patate, to spend the night at a 300-year old hacienda, hidden among the mountains, a magical ambience, where, as the afternoon mist descends, stories are told about those who left in search of the treasure of the Incas in the nearby Llanganatis - and never returned...

**Dinner is at the hotel tonight.**

**Day 3 Ecuador:** Patate – Banos – Route of the Cascades – Ambato – El Arenal - Riobamba

**Breakfast in the hotel.**

**After breakfast**, check-out of the hotel and meet your group in the lobby of the hotel to continue your journey through the Andes.



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**After breakfast**, take a spectacular route along the gorge of the Pastaza River to the town of Baños (Baths), right at the foot of Tungurahua Volcano, from where the thermal waters that gave it its name emerge.

Drive along the Route of the Cascades to El Pailón del Diablo (the Devil's Cauldron) -the most adventurous will descend (medium difficulty) to observe the impressive cascade up close, surrounded by subtropical vegetation and orchids.

The force and sound of the waters can also be appreciated from a lookout point without descending.

**Lunch is served at a hacienda** / hostel in the surroundings, and in the afternoon a short stroll along Baños -a town with an international pulse, full of people from all over the world as well as many locals

who take pilgrimages to the Sanctuary of the Virgin of Holy Water.



From here, the route to Riobamba climbs up the mountain, to where the clouds can be touched, alongside the massive Chimborazo, the highest mountain of Ecuador, on the high paramo where vicuñas graze and scamper - this is a protected Fauna Preserve.

On the hillsides, where the land is worked beneath the plow, one might think the farmer's true objective was to paint the hills in fascinating patterns, not just to till the dark, fertile soil. Great photo ops on this route!

**Arrive to Riobamba for dinner and lodging.**

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## Day 4 Ecuador: Riobamba – Alausí – Devil's Nose – Alausí – Ingapirca - Cuenca

**Breakfast in the hotel.**

**After breakfast**, check-out of the hotel and meet your group in the lobby of the hotel to continue your journey through the Andes.

**This morning we depart by road**, skirting the flanks of the Andes, an astonishing ride, twisting and turning, along bridging ravines and river gorges.

Ride through Indian villages and cultivated fields; here is where most of the cereals in Ecuador are grown, among them, the quinoa, considered the perfect grain for its nutritional value.





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**After about 2 hours arrive at the small town of Alausí**, the beating heart of the rehabilitation of the Ecuadorian Railway Company in the last years. Great effort has been made to restore the 100-year old train to its old glory and romance. Stations have been renewed, railways and sleepers replaced, engines and classic coaches renovate, and, most important, the project involves the local communities along the route in the rail operation.

**The highlight is the train ride and its thrilling 800-metre (2630-foot) descent on the zigzag cuttings on the rock of the Devil's Nose.**

At the bottom one finds the newly renovated Station of Sibambe. Here there is time to visit the local museum "Condor Puñuna" built and run by the Nizag community, see the display of local handcrafts, fruit and medicinal plants and try the local coffee.

The train whistle calls guests back on board for the return to the Station of Alausí, where a light snack is served to regain strength.

**Continue exploring the Andean world by motorcoach** to the south, visiting the Inca Fortress of Ingapirca en-route.

**Lunch in the area.**

**Arrival to Cuenca at dusk for dinner and accommodations.**



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## Day 5 Ecuador: Cuenca

### Breakfast in the hotel.

**After breakfast**, check-out of the hotel and meet your group in the lobby of the hotel to continue your journey through the Andes.

Cuenca is Ecuador's third largest city; yet it still retains its pleasant provincial air. Its red tiled roofs, cobblestone streets, flowery plazas and museums make it very special.



This comprehensive visit includes the Plaza of San Sebastian, a colorful artisans market, where handicrafts are sold.

Then, visit the Museum of Modern Art, featuring an excellent collection of contemporary fine art.

Next is a visit to the flower market at the small plaza in front of the carved stone entrance to the church of El Carmen de la Asunción.

From here, a stroll to the main square, surrounded by the imposing blue-domed Cathedral, the Court of Justice, the Municipal Palace, the Governor's Palace and the Church of El Sagrario.

Then, a drive along the Tomebamba river to admire the city's overhanging houses. **Lunch** is at one of the excellent restaurants in Cuenca.



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In the afternoon, drive for a short visit to a ceramics handcraft shop. Then, observe the whole process of making the famous Panama Hats of high-quality toquilla straw.



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**The Spirit of the Andes adventure ends** at the airport .

You will meet your flight to Quito.

**Upon arrival in Quito**, you either meet your flight to the US & Home or if your flights leave in the morning, you will be met by your private driver who will transfer you to your hotel where you will check-in for the night.

## Day 6 Ecuador: Quito – US - & Home

**Breakfast in the hotel.**

**After breakfast**, you are at leisure to explore a little on your own or relax in the hotel.

**Lunch and Dinner are on your own today.**

## Day 7 Ecuador: Quito – US - & Home

**Breakfast in the hotel.**

**After breakfast**, check-out of the hotel and meet your private English-speaking driver in the lobby of your hotel for your transfer to the airport to meet your international flight to the US and forward to Home.

**End of Services.**

**Ready to plan your journey? Contact us today ! 678-500-9548**

**Schedule Your Creative Planning Session Now!**

### \*Notes:

International Flights are not included in this itinerary.

You may opt to extend your stay in Cuenca to enjoy a more complete visit to this important city.

Dress in layers (T-shirt, blouse, sweater, coat). Take a warm coat for evening and rain protection.. Sun protection (SPF 40) even if the day is cloudy. Hat or cap. Good walking shoes.

Altitude: 2,550 meters (7,750 feet) to 3,000 meters (10,000 feet)

Average Temperature: Day 10° to 25° C / 50° to 77° F. Night 6° to 10° C / 43° to 50° F.

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