



TOUR of ECUADOR: Along the Spine of the Andes and Beyond...

**Cloud Forest, High Andean Páramo, Snow-capped
Volcanoes, Colonial and pre-Colonial towns**

June 20 - 30, 2010

**with Optional Extension to Coastal Dry Forest, the Beach
and the "Poor Man's Galapagos"**

June 30 - July 2, 2010

Tour Leader: Abi Rome, Tierra Vista Tours & Consulting

Join us on a tour designed to please families, as well as adults traveling on their own or with friends. Our small group will visit a variety of highland peoples and ecosystems to participate in outdoor activities, foods and local culture. We will see, experience, and learn about the many natural and cultural assets that Ecuador offers.

And, there are many. While it's a small country - only the size of Colorado - it has amazing biodiversity. With a topography that starts at sea level in the west, climbs to over 19,000 feet, and then descends to 500 feet in the eastern Amazon, there are an almost infinite number of microhabitats. Human populations - of indigenous, mestizo, Afro-Ecuadorian and others - are nearly as diverse. This tour will give you a small taste of this richness: stunning vistas of snow-capped volcanoes, waterfalls, mountain lakes, verdant cloud forests, colonial and indigenous architecture, and warm, generous people.

Abi Rome, your tour leader, has worked in conservation and ecotourism for over 20 years. She lived and worked in Ecuador for five years, and knows the culture well. She is thrilled to take you to her favorite places, including the cloud forest, páramo (high altitude steppe) and ancient Incan ruins.

Some of the highlights of this trip are:

- Lush green cloud forest - filled with orchids, bromeliads, tree ferns, armadillos, tanagers, toucans, quetzals and more
- Overnights in centuries-old haciendas - where we'll experience the life, art and culture of highland Andeans during colonial times

- Horseback riding across the páramo - we'll put on ponchos and chaps to experience and observe the lives of Andean cowboys and their sheep dogs
- Cotopaxi National Park - for a hike in the high mountains, maybe even reaching the snowline at about 15,000 ft. above sea level
- Zip-line ride - over the high mountain forest to get bird's-eye views of the tree canopy
- Avenue of the Andes - with views of at least four snow-capped volcanoes, including the tallest mountain on earth
- Spa town of Baños - well known for its hot springs, waterfalls, excellent food and relaxed atmosphere
- Ingapirca - Ecuador's largest Incan ruins, featuring a Temple of the Sun
- Historic train ride on the "Devil's Nose" - catching mountain views as we zigzag down a 45-degree gradient on a steam-powered train
- Colonial city of Cuenca - a World Heritage site with cobblestone streets, old-world cathedrals, colonial parks and a colorful market

Our trips are generally friendly and informal. We try to stay in small hotels and rustic lodges operated by Ecuadorians interested in protecting their natural and cultural resources. Our visit will help them do so, and as responsible travelers we will also apply a small portion of our tourist dollars to a worthy conservation or rural development project.

Cost is \$2950*, which covers lodging (in a double occupancy room), most meals, ground transport, guides, and pre-departure information. Not included are international airfare, airport taxes, entrance fees for optional activities, alcoholic and extra beverages, and tips. **Please note** that trip begins in Quito and ends in Guayaquil, and that transport from Guayaquil to Quito at the end of the trip is not included.

Special Offer: \$100 discount if you pay in full by March 1.



Optional Extension to the Coast

Highly Recommended!

From Guayaquil, where the main trip ends, we will travel along the coast to Machalilla National Park, known for its dry forests, beautiful sand beaches and rich birdlife. We will stay in a Mediterranean style lodge overlooking the Pacific Ocean, from where we can visit a small fishing village with an archaeological museum displaying artifacts from over 5,000 years ago. We will take an all-day boat

trip to Isla de la Plata, a wildlife sanctuary similar to the Galapagos Islands offering undisturbed habitat for an abundance of seabirds and other marine life. Finally, we will visit tropical moist forest to learn about lowland plants and animals.

Extension cost: \$650*, which covers lodging (in a double occupancy room), all meals, ground transport, guides, and pre-departure information. Not included are airfares, airport taxes, alcoholic and extra beverages, and tips.



To register for the main tour, send a \$500 deposit** (via check, made out to Abigail Rome) to:

Abigail Rome
Tierra Vista Tours & Consulting
605 Ray Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Please provide complete contact information and indicate your interest in joining us for the coast extension.

Single supplements are available for \$430 for the main tour and \$75 for the extension.
Reduced prices available for children under 12.

For more information, see www.tierra-vista.org and/or contact Abi at abirome@earthlink.net or 301-608-8094.

** Please note that trip costs are subject to slight changes, depending on number of participants.*

*** Deposit, payment and cancellation policy: the deposit is non-refundable. Payment balance is due 60 days or more before the trip. For cancellations made at least 30 days before the trip, 80% of the balance will be refunded. Cancellations 15-30 days before will be refunded 50% of balance. Cancellations 14 days or less before the trip are non-refundable.*