





Ecuador's Splendor: A Journey from the Andes to the Coast V2.1

Trip plan for Lenet Compton

Lenet Compton

 2 adults (couple)

 Oct 24 - Nov 3, 2025 (11 days)

 Locations Included

- Quito (3 nights)
- Cuenca (2 nights)
- Guayaquil (1 night)
- Puerto Ayora (4 nights)

Highlights of your trip



Mindo: Get dazzled by the wildlife in Mindo Cloud Forest!



Otavalo : Explore one of the most renowned markets in Latin America!



Cuenca: Discover a City Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site!

Daily Schedule

Day	Date	Highlights	Location
Day 1	Friday Oct 24, 2025	Arrival in Quito, Welcome to Ecuador: Let Your Adventure Begin! (Self Guided)	Dann Carlton Quito Quito Mariscal Sucre Int. Airport (UIO) to Quito
Day 2	Saturday Oct 25, 2025	Mindo Cloud Forest	Dann Carlton Quito Quito Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
Day 3	Sunday Oct 26, 2025	Otavalo Market - Cuicocha Lagoon	Dann Carlton Quito Quito Meals: Breakfast
Day 4	Monday Oct 27, 2025	Quito to Cuenca, Arrival to Cuenca - City Tour	Hotel Oro Verde Cuenca Quito to Cuenca Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
Day 5	Tuesday Oct 28, 2025	Leisure Day in Cuenca	Hotel Oro Verde Cuenca Cuenca
Day 6	Wednesday Oct 29, 2025	From the Highlands to the Coast: Cajas National Park to Guayaquil, Transfer to Guayaquil	Wyndham Guayaquil, Puerto Santa Ana Cuenca to Guayaquil Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
Day 7	Thursday Oct 30, 2025	Guayaquil to Puerto Ayora, Welcome to Santa Cruz Island: Visit Highlands & Charles Darwin Research Station In Style	Villa Laguna hotel Guayaquil to Puerto Ayora Meals: Breakfast
Day 8	Friday Oct 31, 2025	Reforestation Program in Galapagos Islands : Rancho Primicias	Villa Laguna hotel Puerto Ayora Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
Day 9	Saturday Nov 1, 2025	Kayaking on Tortuga Bay	Villa Laguna hotel Puerto Ayora Meals: Breakfast
Day 10	Sunday Nov 2, 2025	Experience the Pristine Beauty of Galápagos Islands: Discovering an Uninhabited Island	Villa Laguna hotel Puerto Ayora Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
Day 11	Monday Nov 3, 2025	Puerto Ayora to Quito, Connect with your flight back home (Departure), Departure	Puerto Ayora to Quito Mariscal Sucre Int. Airport (UIO) Meals: Breakfast

Detailed itinerary

1

Arrive in Quito

Oct 24, 2025



Private transfer from the airport to your Quito hotel

Private transfer · 0.5 hours

Your Quito adventure begins the moment you arrive at Mariscal Sucre International Airport in Tababela. To make your journey hassle-free, a reliable and courteous driver will be waiting to pick you up and take you to your hotel in Quito. Enjoy a comfortable 45-minute ride, where you can relax and unwind after a long flight. Take in the breathtaking views of the Andean mountains and the lush green valleys along the way. Your driver will be happy to provide you with some valuable insights into the city's culture and traditions. Get ready to explore the wonders of Quito as you reach your hotel.

Tell Nicolas what you think



Welcome to Ecuador: Let Your Adventure Begin! (Self Guided)

Self guided · 1 hour

We extend a warm welcome to Ecuador, and we couldn't be more excited to have you here! Your journey begins with a sense of relaxation and anticipation as you embark on a scenic **45-minute drive** into the enchanting city of **Quito**. Along the way, the picturesque landscapes will provide a delightful backdrop as you receive a comprehensive overview of the itinerary for your upcoming adventures, setting the stage for a truly memorable experience.

Upon your arrival and check-in at your hotel, we recommend taking some time to immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere of Quito and explore its captivating cultural offerings. Situated at an astonishing elevation of **9,350 feet (2,850 meters)**, Quito proudly stands among the **highest cities in the world**, and its breathtaking views are sure to leave you in awe.

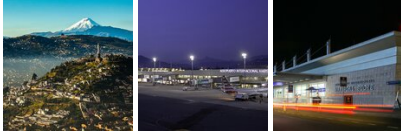
To begin your exploration, take a leisurely stroll through Plaza Foch, a bustling hub known for its lively energy, diverse shopping opportunities, delectable dining options, and fascinating people-watching. As you navigate the charming streets, you'll encounter an array of local vendors, boutiques, and lively cafes, providing a glimpse into the city's vibrant and dynamic culture.

For a refreshing escape into nature, head over to Parque Metropolitano Guanguiltagua, one of the largest urban parks in The Americas. This expansive green oasis offers a serene respite from the bustling city, allowing you to lose yourself amidst its lush foliage, meandering trails, and tranquil surroundings. As you wander through the park, you may come across captivating wildlife and discover hidden spots perfect for relaxation and contemplation.

To truly appreciate Quito's awe-inspiring beauty, embark on an unforgettable journey by hopping on a cable car that will whisk you to the top of Cruz Loma. As you ascend, the panoramic vistas that unfold before you will take your breath away. From this vantage point, you can marvel at the sprawling cityscape below and witness Quito's skyline in all its glory, with the surrounding mountains serving as a majestic backdrop.

We sincerely hope that your first day in Ecuador is filled with wonder and discovery, and we eagerly anticipate sharing many more unforgettable adventures with you as you delve deeper into the treasures this

captivating country has to offer.



Tell Nicolas what you think



Dann Carlton Quito

Avenida República de El Salvador N34-377



Quito

Oct 25, 2025



Mindo Cloud Forest

Private · Breakfast, Lunch Included

Today you'll explore the lush green cloud forest of **Mindo**. Its location at the western slopes of the Andean highlands gives this region mild temperatures and lots of rainfall. Thanks to the favorable conditions, the Mindo forest has an incredibly high biodiversity.

You'll get the chance to see some of the countless birds, butterflies, and insect species that call the region home. Visit the butterfly garden, hike to beautiful waterfalls, or fly between the treetops on a zipline. After, learning to make chocolate and taste your creations.



A delicious lunch included.

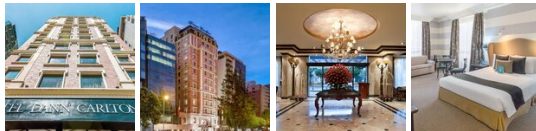
Nicolas

Tell Nicolas what you think



Dann Carlton Quito

Avenida República de El Salvador N34-377



Quito

Oct 26, 2025



Otavalo Market - Cuicocha Lagoon

Private · 8 hours · Breakfast Included

In the morning you will visit to market of Otavalo. Otavalo features one of the most important traditional markets of South America. Here, the indigenous people of the surrounding areas gather to trade anything from animals over handicraft to fresh vegetables and fruits. Take a stroll through the streets and maybe try some of the local street food such as salted mango or fritada con mote, fried pork with cooked corn. In the afternoon you will hike around the crater lagoon of Cuicocha. On the trail your guide will explain to you the high altitude flora and fauna and the history of the once active volcano. Alternatively, you can ride in a boat around the two islands.

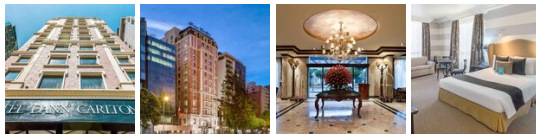


Tell Nicolas what you think



Dann Carlton Quito

Avenida República de El Salvador N34-377



Quito to Cuenca

Oct 27, 2025



Taking Flight: Quito to Cuenca in 50 Minutes

Flight · 3 hours

Commencing your day with an invigorating early breakfast, you will soon be greeted by private transportation ready to whisk you away to Quito Airport - Local Departures. Anticipation fills the air as you embark on a seamless journey towards the captivating city of Cuenca. The excitement builds as you step onto the aircraft, knowing that within a mere 50 minutes, you will find yourself amidst the splendor of this beautiful destination.

Tell Nicolas what you think



Arrival to Cuenca - City Tour

Private · Breakfast, Lunch Included

Depending on your arrival in Cuenca, your guide will pick you up for a city tour, or you will have a leisure afternoon in Cuenca City. The beauty and colonial ambiance of Cuenca is best experienced on foot. Our three to four hours Cuenca city tour weaves its way through the old town center, designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, to give you a short introduction to the city before heading to Turi to enjoy the incredible view.

The rest of the afternoon is at leisure. Overnight stay in Cuenca city.



A delicious lunch included.

Nicolas

Tell Nicolas what you think



Hotel Oro Verde Cuenca

Av Ordoñez Lasso S/N, Cuenca



Cuenca

Oct 28, 2025



Leisure Day in Cuenca

Self guided

Today, you will discover Cuenca on your own or spend a relaxing day in your accommodation. Modernity and tradition collide in Cuenca, a laid-back, liveable city and UNESCO World Heritage site. Food lovers can choose between market tours and interactive cooking classes. Regardless, take time for brief stops at the Panama Hat Museum or at some of Cuenca's many chocolate shops to sample cacao products—both essential Ecuadorian experiences.

Overnight: Cuenca



Tell Nicolas what you think



Hotel Oro Verde Cuenca

Av Ordoñez Lasso S/N, Cuenca



Cuenca to Guayaquil

Oct 29, 2025



From the Highlands to the Coast: Cajas National Park to Guayaquil

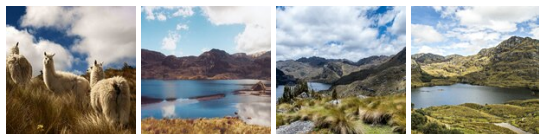
Private · Breakfast, Lunch Included

Experience a day brimming with joy and adventure as you begin your morning with a delightful traditional breakfast, surrounded by the breathtaking landscapes of Cuenca. Get ready to be swept away on an exciting journey to the vibrant city of Guayaquil, but not before immersing yourself in the enchantment of **El Cajas National Park**.

Prepare to be spellbound by the natural wonders that await you at *El Cajas National Park*—a true haven of joy, boasting 200 glacial lakes and an intricate network of hiking trails. As you traverse this magical landscape, you'll wander through gaps and find yourself amidst the captivating Polylepis forests. Your knowledgeable guide will regale you with fascinating tales about the lush moorland vegetation, infusing your adventure with even more wonder and delight. Brace yourself for the highlight of the trek—the awe-inspiring **Garden of the Virgin of Cajas** or the **Tres Cruces Viewpoint**, perched at an astounding elevation of 13,648 feet (4160 masl) above the sea level. Prepare to be swept away by the panoramic views that unfold before your eyes, filling your heart with unbridled joy and gratitude.

Recharge your spirits with a delectable lunch along the way (*not included*), relishing the flavors and sharing hearty laughs with fellow explorers. The adventure continues as you embark on a scenic **3.5-hour drive**, accompanied by your expert guide. As you approach one of the highest points in the Ecuadorian highlights, excitement builds, knowing that you are about to descend towards the breathtaking Coast of Ecuador. Delight in the picturesque sight of sprawling rice plantations, their vibrant green hues guiding you along the path as you journey towards your final destination—the captivating city of Guayaquil. Upon arrival, your guide will drop you off at your hotel, providing a relaxing haven for you to unwind and bask in the joyful memories of the day.

Allow the sheer joy of discovery, the unparalleled beauty of nature, and the shared laughter throughout the journey to fill your heart as you embark on this extraordinary day from Cuenca to Guayaquil, with the magical interlude at El Cajas National Park.



Nicolas

A delicious lunch included.

Tell Nicolas what you think



Private English Speaking Driver Guide Service

Private driver · 8 hours

Embark on an enriching road trip with your experienced **driver/guide**, ready to unveil the hidden gems along the way. As you embark on this adventure, prepare for a journey filled with fascinating highlights,

breathtaking landscapes, and ample opportunities to immerse yourself in the local culture.

Your driver/guide will share captivating stories and insights about the surroundings, offering a deeper understanding of the places you'll encounter. From historical landmarks to natural wonders, each stop will unveil a new facet of the region's charm.

During the trip, enjoy leisurely breaks that allow you to stretch your legs and fully appreciate the surroundings. Whether it's a tranquil park, a picturesque viewpoint, or a quaint village, these pauses offer moments of serenity and the chance to connect with the environment.

Savor the flavors of the region as your driver/guide recommends a local spot for a delightful meal. Indulge in traditional cuisine, tasting the authentic flavors that reflect the local culinary heritage. It's an opportunity to not only satisfy your hunger but also experience the vibrant gastronomic scene of the area.

As you journey through captivating landscapes and encounter intriguing landmarks, be sure to capture the beauty around you. From panoramic vistas to intricate details, take plenty of photos to immortalize the memories created during this unforgettable road trip.

With each stop and interaction, you'll gain a deeper appreciation for the destination, its history, and its people. Embrace the spirit of adventure and allow yourself to be immersed in the richness of the journey.

Get ready for an extraordinary road trip experience, where every mile holds new discoveries, cultural encounters, and cherished moments that will stay with you long after the journey ends.



Tell Nicolas what you think



Wyndham Guayaquil, Puerto Santa Ana

Calle Numa Pompilio Llona S N



Guayaquil to Puerto Ayora

Oct 30, 2025



Flight from Guayaquil to Baltra Airport

Flight · 2.5 hours

Today, you will be taken to Guayaquil airport to catch your flight to the Galapagos Islands.

Tell Nicolas what you think



Welcome to Santa Cruz Island: Visit Highlands & Charles Darwin Research Station In Style

Private · 4 hours · Breakfast Included

Welcome to the Galapagos Islands! You have arrived at Santa Cruz Island.

Welcome to the Enchanted Islands of the Galapagos, where you will embark on a journey of a lifetime. As you arrive at Baltra Airport, a friendly and knowledgeable **private** local guide awaits you on a scenic tour of this unique archipelago.

Your first stop is a local farm in the highlands of Santa Cruz. Here, you will find yourself surrounded by dozens of giant tortoises that roam freely in their natural habitat. Please take a moment to appreciate these majestic creatures as you wander around the farm, observing their behavior and learning about their importance in the Galapagos ecosystem.

After your visit, you will enjoy a delicious lunch before continuing your journey. In the afternoon, head to the Charles Darwin Research Station, a world-renowned institution dedicated to the conservation of the Galapagos Islands. Witness firsthand the work of international scientists who come to the Galapagos to carry out critical environmental projects. Learn about the unique ecosystem and the ongoing conservation efforts being made to protect it.

Your final stop for the day is the Fausto Llerena Breeding Center, where giant Galapagos tortoises are bred and cared for in a safe and controlled environment. This is the best place on the islands to see different tortoise species and learn about each one. Observe the tortoises up close and marvel at their size and unique features.

As your day comes to an end, you will have experienced the wonders of the Galapagos and gained a deeper understanding of the importance of conservation efforts in this unique ecosystem.



Tell Nicolas what you think



Villa Laguna hotel

Moisés Brito y Juan Montalvo Puerto Ayora



Puerto Ayora

Oct 31, 2025



Reforestation Program in Galapagos Islands : Rancho Primicias

Private · 5 hours · Breakfast, Lunch Included

The Reforestation Project at Rancho Primicias in Santa Cruz, Galápagos, aims to restore the natural habitat of the endangered Galápagos giant tortoises by addressing the issue of invasive species. The initiative involves removing harmful plants and replacing them with native flora to regenerate the ecosystem, which is essential for the tortoises' survival, as they rely on specific plants for food and shelter.

Participants can engage in hands-on reforestation sessions, contributing directly to habitat restoration. The project underscores the importance of collaboration among conservation organizations, local communities, and ecotourism, focusing on healing the land and ensuring a sustainable future for these iconic creatures.

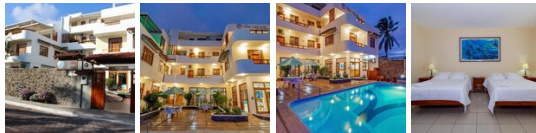


Tell Nicolas what you think



Villa Laguna hotel

Moisés Brito y Juan Montalvo Puerto Ayora



Puerto Ayora

Nov 1, 2025



Kayaking on Tortuga Bay

Small group · 4 hours · Breakfast Included

Embark on an invigorating 45-minute hike from Puerto Ayora, eagerly anticipating the wonders that await you at the heavenly **Tortuga Bay**. As you make your way through the mesmerizing landscape, you'll be captivated by the soft coral sand beneath your feet and the awe-inspiring vistas that unfold before your eyes. This stretch of coastline is not only famous for its beauty but is also considered one of the archipelago's most picturesque spots.

Upon reaching the bay, prepare for an unforgettable experience as you embark on a kayak adventure across crystal-clear waters. Glide along the coastline, marveling at the abundant marine life that thrives in these pristine waters. From your kayak, you'll have the unique opportunity to observe colonies of marine iguanas basking on the rocks and marine birds gracefully soaring above. The surrounding mangroves, with their intricate root systems, create a habitat rich in biodiversity. Keep an eye out for fascinating coastal flora, such as vibrant cacti forests and other exotic plant species.

As you continue your exploration, you might be fortunate enough to witness an intriguing array of bird species that call this area home. Look up to the skies and spot the local pelicans and finches, displaying their natural beauty in flight. If you venture closer to the salt lagoon that backs onto the mangroves, you may even be treated to the sight of graceful flamingos elegantly strolling through the shallow waters.

After an exhilarating kayaking experience, take some time to unwind on the soft sands of Tortuga Bay. Bask in the warm sunlight, let the gentle breeze caress your skin, and appreciate the tranquility of this pristine beach. If you're eager to delve deeper into the underwater wonders, grab your snorkeling gear and explore the vibrant marine ecosystem just beneath the water's surface. Discover colorful coral reefs teeming with tropical fish, graceful sea turtles gliding by, and an array of other fascinating marine species.

As the activity draws to a close, reluctantly leave behind the captivating beauty of Tortuga Bay and make your way back to Puerto Ayora. Reflect on the unforgettable experiences and breathtaking sights you encountered throughout the day, knowing that you have truly immersed yourself in the natural wonders of the Galapagos archipelago.

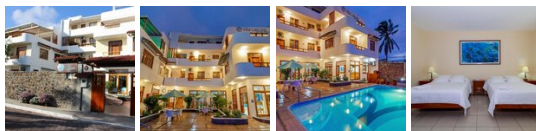


Tell Nicolas what you think



Villa Laguna hotel

Moisés Brito y Juan Montalvo Puerto Ayora



Puerto Ayora

Nov 2, 2025



Experience the Pristine Beauty of Galápagos Islands: Discovering an Uninhabited Island

Small group · 8 hours · Breakfast, Lunch Included

Embark on an unforgettable adventure to explore the stunning beauty of the Galápagos Islands, home to some of the world's most unique and diverse wildlife. During your tour, you'll have a chance to visit Santa Fé, South Plaza, Bartolomé, or North Seymour, depending on the permit granted by the National Park authorities for that daily activity.

As you set sail on your boat, be prepared to witness the awe-inspiring views of the turquoise waters and rocky shorelines of the archipelago. Your expert guide will accompany you on a hike to explore the untouched natural habitats of the islands, where you'll discover an array of exotic flora and fauna.

The Galápagos Islands are a paradise for wildlife enthusiasts, with a diverse range of species that inhabit the land and sea. Keep an eye out for giant tortoises, marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies, and many other fascinating creatures.

After a morning of exploration, take a break on the deck for a scrumptious lunch, before continuing on your adventure. Relax on the pristine beaches and soak up the sun, or take a dip in the crystal-clear waters for a refreshing swim.

At the end of your tour, return to Puerto Ayora, feeling invigorated and inspired by the natural wonders of the Galápagos Islands.

Difficulty Level: Low

Altitude: 0 m

Recommended age: 5+ years

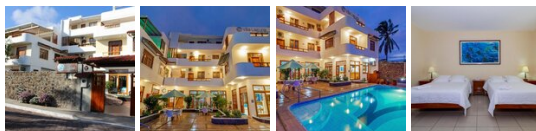


Tell Nicolas what you think



Villa Laguna hotel

Moisés Brito y Juan Montalvo Puerto Ayora



Transfer to Quito Mariscal Sucre Int. Airport (UIO), Departure

Nov 3, 2025



Transfer to Baltra Island for Your Flight Back to the Mainland

Flight · 3 hours · Breakfast Included

With your private guide, and at the designated time, you'll be picked up from your hotel and embark on a captivating expedition as you depart from the picturesque town of Puerto Ayora, venturing across the azure expanse of Itabaca Channel aboard a charming ferry.

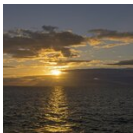
Let the gentle sea breeze caress your face as you traverse the shimmering waters, leaving behind a trail of ripples that dances in harmony with your sense of adventure.

As the ferry docks on the opposite shore, a world of possibilities unfurls before you. Prepare to embark on the next leg of your remarkable journey, as you make your way towards the mainland, guided by the whispers of exploration and the allure of new horizons.

Board a flight that will effortlessly carry you across vast distances, defying gravity itself, and gaze out the window as the landscape unfurls beneath you, revealing a tapestry of diverse terrains and ever-changing views.

With each passing mile, feel the palpable excitement of venturing towards your next destination, a place brimming with its own stories, traditions, and wonders to behold. Your voyage becomes an interplay of departure and arrival, a symphony of anticipation and discovery.

Embrace this moment as you embark on the next chapter of your extraordinary expedition. Let your heart be your compass, guiding you toward the boundless possibilities that await you upon your arrival to mainland Ecuador.



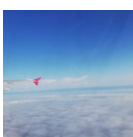
Tell Nicolas what you think



Connect with your flight back home (Departure)

Self guided

Upon arrival from the Galapagos Islands to Ecuador's mainland airport, you will connect on the same day with your international flight so you can return home with some everlasting memories. See you next time!



Tell Nicolas what you think

Accommodations

Day 1 - 4 · Check in: Oct 24, 2025, Check out: Oct 27, 2025

Dann Carlton Quito

Quito Dann Carlton offers stylish accommodation a 1-hour drive from Mariscal Sucre Airport. The hotel boasts a panoramic swimming pool, a fitness area and a restaurant to enjoy Ecuadorian cuisine. Free WiFi is available throughout the property.



Nicolas

Double Standard Room

Tell Nicolas what you think

Day 4 - 6 · Check in: Oct 27, 2025, Check out: Oct 29, 2025

Hotel Oro Verde Cuenca

Hotel Oro Verde Cuenca features a swimming pool, a fitness centre and a garden, this hotel offers free WiFi and free parking. There is a restaurant and a business centre.

Deluxe Double Room



Nicolas

Deluxe Double Room

Tell Nicolas what you think

Day 6 - 7 · Check in: Oct 29, 2025, Check out: Oct 30, 2025

Wyndham Guayaquil, Puerto Santa Ana

Big City, Big Hospitality



Nicolas

Double Standard Room

Tell Nicolas what you think

Day 7 - 11 · Check in: Oct 30, 2025, Check out: Nov 03, 2025

Villa Laguna hotel

Villa Laguna is a hostel with 19 rooms of standard, superior and deluxe quality. Each room have cable TV, hot water, air conditioning and refrigerator. It features an outdoor pool and a restaurant. It is within walking distance of the Lagoon of Nymphs, the boardwalk and the city center where you can find ATMs, restaurants, bars and souvenir shops. Just 15 minutes' walk from the Visitor Center of the Galapagos National Park.



Nicolas

Double Standard Room

Tell Nicolas what you think

What's Included

Activities

- Oct 25: Mindo Cloud Forest (private group)
- Oct 26: Otavalo Market - Cuicocha Lagoon (private group)
- Oct 27: Arrival to Cuenca - City Tour (private group)
- Oct 29: From the Highlands to the Coast: Cajas National Park to Guayaquil (private group)
- Oct 30: Welcome to Santa Cruz Island: Visit Highlands & Charles Darwin Research Station In Style (private group)
- Oct 31: Reforestation Program in Galapagos Islands : Rancho Primicias (private group)
- Nov 1: Kayaking on Tortuga Bay (small group)
- Nov 2: Experience the Pristine Beauty of Galápagos Islands: Discovering an Uninhabited Island (small group)

Transportation

- Oct 24: Private transfer from the airport to your Quito hotel
- Oct 27: Taking Flight: Quito to Cuenca in 50 Minutes
- Oct 29: Private English Speaking Driver Guide Service
- Oct 30: Flight from Guayaquil to Baltra Airport
- Nov 3: Transfer to Baltra Island for Your Flight Back to the Mainland

Accommodations

- Oct 24 - Oct 27: 3 nights stay at Dann Carlton Quito (Quito)
- Oct 27 - Oct 29: 2 nights stay at Hotel Oro Verde Cuenca (Cuenca)
- Oct 29: 1 night stay at Wyndham Guayaquil, Puerto Santa Ana (Guayaquil)
- Oct 30 - Nov 3: 4 nights stay at Villa Laguna hotel (Puerto Ayora)

Other details

- **Flight from Quito to Cuenca (UIO - CUE) Included**
- **Domestic flights to the Galapagos and back (UIO - GPS - UIO) Included**

Excludes

- International flights
- The meals not mentioned in the trip plan
- Personal expenses
- Travel insurance, and repatriation insurance
- Optional excursions, activities, and optional tours

- Reservations marked as "reserved by traveler" are reservations that the traveler is responsible for directly. These items are not reserved or supported by kimkim and are included in the trip plan just for completeness.
- Any charges due at the hotel include local city taxes
- **Galapagos US \$ 20 TCT card**
- **US\$ 200 per person in cash Galapagos National Park entry fee**
- **Wetsuits**
- **Tips**

Places you will visit

Quito

Oct 24 - Oct 27, 2025 (3 nights)



Ecuador's most culturally rich city, **Quito** is packed with attractions, from impressive archeological museums to hilltop viewpoints high above the metropolis. Not to be missed is Quito's **old center**, a Unesco World Heritage site dotted with colonial mansions and gilded churches, some of which date back to the 16th century. High-quality lodging options and some of the country's best restaurants make Quito an excellent base before or after visiting other parts of the country.

City tours take you to key landmarks in Quito, like **La Compañía**, a gold-filled Jesuit church that took over 160 years to complete. Just north of the city, the **Inti Ñan museum**, which lies near the equator line, has interactive exhibits and demonstrations on water and energy. You can also learn about Andean culinary techniques during a private cooking class.

Suggested things to do:

- Take a day trip to the **Termas de Papallacta**, a hot springs complex with over a dozen steaming pools amid mountain views.
- Ride the **TelefériQo**, an aerial gondola, to the top of **Cruz Loma** for lofty views from an elevation of 12,900 feet (3932m).
- Have a craft beer inside one of a growing number of microbreweries around the city. **Cherusker Cervecería Alemana**, located in the lively **Mariscal district**, has some excellent drafts.

Tell Nicolas what you think

Cuenca

Oct 27 - Oct 29, 2025 (2 nights)



Like Quito, **Cuenca** is a striking Andean colonial city with a cobblestone-lined old town that's landmarked as a Unesco World Heritage site. Unlike the Ecuadorian capital, however, Cuenca is much smaller and feels remarkably low-key, while not lacking for handsomely designed plazas and 17th-century architecture. Locals, in fact, feel they live in the prettier city. Given Cuenca's location along four rivers, its Andean backdrop and proximity to misty *páramo* (mountainous grasslands), many travelers tend to agree.

Guided tours of Cuenca take in some of its finest buildings, including the **Catedral de la Inmaculada Concepción**, a massive cathedral whose sky-blue domes are visible from all over town. Cuenca is an excellent base for day trips. You can visit the nearby towns of **Gualaceo**, **Sigsig** and **Chordeleg**, which are famed for their craft-making traditions. North of Cuenca, you'll find **Ingapirca**, Ecuador's best-preserved archeological site, home to ruins that predate the Inca. There is also a Panama Hat factory where you can see the painstaking work that goes into producing a quality *sombrero de paja toquilla* (toquilla-straw hat).

Suggested things to do:

- Spend the day exploring Cuenca on foot. Take in architecture of the old town followed by a riverside stroll along the **Tomebamba**.
- Enjoy the pulse of the city at the lively **Mercado 10 de Agosto**. Head to the food hall in the back to try traditional dishes like *mote pillo*, a dish of hominy, eggs and spices.
- Sample refreshing craft brews out on the patio of **Lacraft Beer Garden**, a microbrewery and pub with Cuenca's best beer selection.

Tell Nicolas what you think

Guayaquil

Oct 29 - Oct 30, 2025 (1 night)



Guayaquil is both the largest city in Ecuador and its economic engine, home to looming high-rises and a fast-growing population. A beautifully revitalized riverfront, excellent museums and historic hillside neighborhoods are the main attractions, while some spectacular coastline lies just outside the city. The tropical vibe, unique cuisine (heavily leaning towards seafood) and intriguing history make Guayaquil a fascinating counterpoint to the highland city of **Quito**.

On a city tour, you can see the **Malecón**, the waterfront along the Río Guayas that's much loved by locals. Here you'll find open-air restaurants, leafy parks and gardens, historical monuments and a wide promenade stretching for 1.6 miles (2.5km) with views over the churning waterway. Just above the waterfront, the neighborhoods of **Las Peñas** and **Cerro Santa Ana** are full of brightly painted homes, galleries, cafes and staircase-like lanes where you can enjoy panoramic views across the city. Outside of Guayaquil, you can explore **Churute Mangrove Reserve**, home to the nation's densest collection of red and black mangroves, and a hotspot for viewing aquatic birds and other wildlife.

Suggested things to do:

- Try some of Guayaquil's best-loved dishes such as *cangrejo* (crab) and *encebollados* (a fish stew made with cassava and red onions).
- Browse for crafts from all over Ecuador at the **Mercado Artesanal (artisans' market)**. You'll find textiles, jewelry, clothing, Panama hats, toys and artwork.
- Learn about Guayaquil's history at the **Museo en Miniatura: Guayaquil en la Historia**, a whimsical museum full of elaborate miniature displays that cover pirate attacks, devastating fires and revolutionary upheaval.

Tell Nicolas what you think

Puerto Ayora

Oct 30 - Nov 3, 2025 (4 nights)



Often the main point of arrival to the **Galapagos**, **Puerto Ayora** on the **Isla Santa Cruz** is the largest town in the archipelago while still being a relaxing place to unwind before or after a boat tour. Strolling along the waterfront, you'll spot sea lions basking on boats, lounging along the shore, and hanging out at the open-air fish market in hopes of getting lucky. Puerto Ayora has excellent lodging options, good seafood restaurants, and some appealing attractions just outside of town.

A morning or afternoon bay tour provides a good introduction to the Galapagos, as you'll visit some of the pretty shorelines of Santa Cruz and have the opportunity to see playful sea lions while snorkeling. Heading farther out, you can take a day trip to an uninhabited island, spotting wildlife while visiting **Santa Fé**, **South Plazas**, **Bartolomé**, or **North Seymour**. You can see the archipelago's famed giant tortoises at the **Charles Darwin Research Station** and look for marine iguanas and unique bird species along the pretty beach of **Tortuga Bay**.

Suggested things to do:

- Enjoy fish and seafood at one of the restaurants on **Charles Binford street** (also called Los Kioskos). It's lively in the evening, when you can eat al fresco along the street.
- Hire a taxi for the 30-minute drive northeast of town to **El Garrapatero**, a beach with tidal pools and a lagoon where you can sometimes spot flamingos and black-necked stilts.
- Rent a bike (or better yet an e-bike) for the uphill ride to **Los Gemelos**, twin sinkholes surrounded by scalesia forest in the Santa Cruz highlands.

Tell Nicolas what you think

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We are specialized in Ecuador & Galápagos Tailor-Made Trips, providing fascinating cultural and adventurous experiences in the Andes; relaxing beach holidays on the sandy shores of the Pacific Coast; trips into the mysterious verdant world of the Amazon rainforest; comfortable hotel accommodation in major cities; and cruises that allow you to explore the enchanted Galápagos Islands.



Nicolas

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4 reviews

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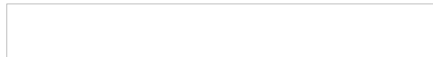


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