

ITINERARY
**CLOUDFORESTS OF ECUADOR:
ALL THE BEST OF THE WILD NORTHWEST**
July 21 – 31, 2025



The fancy Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan is a cloud-forest specialist found in a narrow belt along the Andes of northwestern Ecuador and southwestern Colombia. Photograph by participant Carl Manning.

We include here information for those interested in the 2025 Field Guides Cloudforests of Ecuador: All the Best of the Wild Northwest tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

These additional materials will be made available to those who register for the tour:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for the tour and noting the birds we see
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

From the stunning landscapes of the west highlands of the Pichincha volcano, down through the cloudforests of the Maquipucuna and Mindo Valleys, this tour is full of unique cloudforest specialties and Choco endemics. Our exciting itinerary offers the opportunity to combine top-quality birding in a variety of ecosystems with spectacular landscapes, all the while supporting conservation efforts in this important and vulnerable area. Our trip should record a wide variety of great species across a substantial altitudinal range—Ecuador is amazingly rich—and what follows is just a small sample of what we might see.

In the highlands west of Quito, just beside the Pichincha volcano, we will first visit the famous Yanacocha and Zuroloma reserves. Yanacocha holds a great population of hummingbirds, including Great Sapphirewing, Sword-billed

Hummingbird, and Sapphire-vented and Golden-breasted pufflegs. We'll seek, among many others, Golden-crowned Tanager and several species of mountain-tanagers, such as Hooded, Scarlet-bellied, Black-chested, and Buff-breasted.

After sampling the birds of the Yanacocha area, we'll leave the highlands and enjoy stunning views of montane tropical forest along the Old Nono – Mindo road in an area well known for its unique birds. Our itinerary has been designed to stay in three strategic lodges, Maquipucuna, Guaycapi, and Sachatamia. These will be our bases from which to explore the biodiverse hotspot areas of Mindo Nambillo Protected Forest (designated an Important Bird Area under the Birdlife IBA Program), Mashpi, and some of the Choco lowlands.



*The Scaled Fruiteater is a large cotinga found in the mid-elevations of the Andes.
Photograph by participant Cindy Hamilton.*

As we explore the cloudforest, we should find the fabulous Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, male Andean Cocks-of-the-Rock at their lek, and the elusive White-faced Nunbird. Maquipucuna is the biggest private reserve to the northwest of Quito, with around 6000 hectares of pristine cloudforest. The lodge is at an altitude of 1300 m (4265 ft) and the heart of the reserve is home to an incredible combination of cloudforest and rainforest birds such as Lanceolated Monklet, Esmeraldas Antbird, and Scaled Fruiteater. Conservation work being done at Maquipucuna ensures that the landscape here is spectacular.

This year we are adding the brand new Guaycapi Lodge, where we will stay for two nights. This is a new lodge at 2000 m (6550 ft) that has been open recently and it works perfectly for birds that are unique at this altitude. The lodge has an amazing location, delicious food, fantastic feeders plus an incredible view.

Guaycapi will be our base for 2 nights during which we will explore nearby locations in the upper Tandayapa ridge for different species of antpittas, another chance at Cocks-of-the-Rock, and many birds that are unique in this altitude. From Guaycapi Lodge, we will also take the road to Mashpi where we'll look for birds such as Moss-backed Tanager, Narino Tapaculo, Indigo Flowerpiercer, and other specialties of the area. We will then visit Sachatamia Lodge with its stunning tanager and hummingbird feeders. From here we will do a day visit to Rio Silanche Bird Sanctuary in the Choco lowlands, where we will make a special effort to look for the amazing Long-wattled Umbrellabird and many other lowland species.

We'll spend most of our time birding, in the process seeing many of the birds typical of the middle and upper montane forests as well as the Choco lowlands, whilst also searching for some of the rarest species, all in the context of enjoying the magnificent western foothills. This tour is not designed to run up a long list of species, yet we can expect to see more than 250. Because we'll see many of them well and repeatedly, this itinerary makes an ideal introduction to the cloudforest or just a nice birding vacation for those wishing to have another immersion in these rich biomes. By staying at three lodges in the habitat, we will also have time to become acquainted with the voices of the forest and then to try to see many of these voices, in the process fathoming the richness of the forest's avifauna.

Join us for this tour, offering the chance to experience the cloudforest and its many wonders in the best of Northwestern Ecuador!

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about this and be sure to fully explain your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour:

- **TRAILS:** Most trails are relatively easy, but you must be prepared to handle some mud and be able to negotiate rocks and fallen trees on occasion. Trails may have some steep sections. We may walk from 1-2 miles on some of our outings.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We will likely be standing and waiting for birds to appear; be prepared to be on your feet for much of the day.
- **PACE:** Days will start early (by 5 a.m. most days) and we will likely be out birding and on our feet for much of the day. We will have boxed lunches in the field on several days.
- **ELEVATION:** We begin and end the tour in Quito, at about 9,000 feet. Our lodgings are at 4500-5500 feet; we will ascend to 11,000 feet when we visit Yanacocha.
- **WEATHER:** Temperature will vary according to elevation. Expect temps from 30-85 °F. Rain is a possibility.
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** Whenever possible, we use modern, indoor restrooms, but on occasion, participants must be prepared to make a comfort stop in nature.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible on days when we are changing locations.

This tour can be combined with GALAPAGOS II, July 12 - 22, 2025.

If you are uncertain whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office. If they cannot directly answer your queries, they will put you in touch with the guide.

About the Birding Areas



Yanacocha—Zuroloma, around the northern slope of Volcan Pichincha, at an elevation of 10,000-11,500 ft (3000-3500 m), lies a beautiful treeline forest known as Yanacocha. Protecting one of the sources of Quito's drinking water—some of which still runs through an ancient Inca canal—in 2001 this humid forest was converted to a Jocotoco Foundation Reserve. It offers temperate-forest birding easily accessible from Quito, as well as the possibility of a few highly sought rarities. With a wonderful variety of blossoms throughout the year—and with well-maintained *bebederos* (hummingbird feeders) along the trail—Yanacocha is a veritable hummingbird haven, where one gets excellent views of a nice variety of species. Possibilities include such dazzlers as Mountain Velvetbreast, Great Sapphirewing, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Sapphire-vented Puffleg, Golden-breasted Puffleg, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, and the amazing Sword-billed Hummingbird. The Andean Pygmy-Owl inhabits the slopes in low density, as do Bar-bellied Woodpecker, Tyrannine Woodcreeper, White-browed Spinetail, Equatorial and Tawny antpittas, Blackish Tapaculo, Streak-throated and Smoky bush-tyrants, Crowned Chat-Tyrant, and Barred Fruiteater. Mixed-species flocks may contain Pearled Treerunner, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Rufous Wren,

Blue-backed Conebill, Superciliaried Hemispingus, Glossy and Masked flowerpiercers, Golden-crowned Tanager, Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, and the scarce Black-chested Mountain-Tanager.

Old Nono Mindo Road-Tandayapa—These fabulous birding areas are located west of Quito along roads that run from Quito to Mindo (and beyond) via the *poblados* of Nanegalito and Tandayapa. They have always been favorites of birders since they wind down from well over 10,000 feet (3050 m) through the lush temperate and subtropical west slope of the western cordillera, so rich in Ecuadorian bird life. The old Nono-Mindo road, from Tandayapa to the ridgetop at 7700 feet (2350 m), down to the Mindo entrance road at 5600 feet (1700 m), receives very little traffic, making it ideal for birders in search of such west-slope specialties as Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Toucan Barbet, Spillmann's and Narino tapaculos, Dusky Chlorospingus, and the rare and local Tanager Finch. The hummingbird feeders in private reserves along here can be buzzing with dozens of hummers, from Buff-tailed Coronet and Collared Inca to Gorgeted Sunangel, Fawn-breasted and the scarce Empress brilliants, Tawny-bellied Hermit, White booted Racket-tail, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Violet-tailed Sylph, Rufous gaped Hillstar, Western Emerald, and Purple-throated Woodstar. Look out for White-winged Brush-Finches at the forest edges.

From the Tandayapa Ridge to Mindo, we'll encounter a number of additional birds. Possibilities include Red-billed Parrot, Crimson-mantled and Powerful woodpeckers, Rufous Spinetail, Striped and Streak-capped treehunters, Ashy-headed Tyrannulet, Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager, and the scarce Beautiful Jay (also confined to the west slope). Bright sunny weather can cause the forest to go quiet, but it brings out such raptors as Barred Hawk and Black-and-chestnut Eagle.

Maquipucuna Reserve—This protected area is located in the transition between two global biodiversity hotspots (Choco-Western Ecuador and the Tropical Andes) and has representative characteristics of both bioregions, making it a hyperdiverse area for plant and animals. The combination of the Andes cordillera and the location on the Tropical Interconvergence Zone results in a great variety of habitat and microclimatic variation, generating not only high rates of diversity, but also high rates of endemism.

With 375 species of birds identified, Maquipucuna is truly a bird-watching paradise. The lodge is located in the forest beside a river, and it is surrounded by wildlife. The lodge has many trails leading to different habitats, and the combination of primary and secondary forest holds a unique variety of birds such as White whiskered Puffbird, (subspecies *poliopsis*), Zeledon's Antbird, Green-fronted Lancebill, Whiskered Wren, and Metallic-green Tanager, to mention a few. Additionally, more than 400 species of orchids have been found in the reserve, and the reserve holds a healthy population of Spectacled Bears that can be evident in the valley specially when avocado-type tree fruit is present.



*The Green-fronted Lancebill is one of almost 50 species of hummingbirds possible to see on this tour!
These are cloud-forest dwellers that we'll look for when we visit Maquipucuna Reserve.
Photograph by participant Becky Hansen.*

Mindo area—Staying near Mindo allows us to bird an impressive diversity of nearby habitats. We'll have two days in the very rich lower subtropics and upper tropical zone, where we'll spend our time looking at mixed flocks, feeders, and flowering trees. Cloud-forest Pygmy-Owl, Colombian Screech-Owl, White-whiskered Hermit, Crowned Woodnymph, Green-crowned Brilliant, Velvet-purple Coronet, White throated Daggerbill, Golden-headed and Crested quetzals, Masked Trogon, Rufous and Broad-billed motmots, Choco and Yellow-throated (Chestnut-mandibled) toucans, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Toucan Barbet, Red-faced Spinetail, Lineated and Buff-fronted foliage-gleaners, Strong-billed and Spotted woodcreepers, Ochre-breasted and Scaled antpittas, Ornate Flycatcher, Cinnamon Becard, Scaled Fruiteater, Golden-winged Manakin, Ecuadorian Thrush, Olive-crowned Yellowthroat, Yellow-collared Chlorophonia, Glistening-green, Golden-naped, and Metallic-green tanagers, Tricolored Brush-Finch, and Black-winged Saltator are among the many birds we've seen in the Mindo-Milpe area (around 4000 feet). We'll visit the newly enlarged Milpe Bird Sanctuary, about a half hour away, where the mossy forest supports such specialties as Barred Puffbird, Western Woodhaunter (of the race *assimilis*), Pacific Tuftedcheek, Golden-bellied Warbler (race *chlorophrys*, with quite a distinctive song; often treated as a full species, Choco Warbler, including in *The Birds of Ecuador*), Moss-backed and Rufous-throated tanagers, and the fabulous Club-winged Manakin.

Mashpi Road—Located 90 minutes northwest of Mindo, this unique road is relatively new to birders and holds fantastic variety. As it descends from typical cloudforest habitat at 5000 ft (1500 m) to tropical rainforest at 1800 ft (600 m), it provides an ideal setting for viewing birds. Possibilities here are endless, but our main targets will be, Moss-backed Tanager, Indigo Flowerpiercer, Glistening-green Tanager, Esmeraldas Antbird, Black Solitaire, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, and many other Choco endemics. Our birding here will be along the road, with a combination of walking downhill as our vehicle follows, interspersed with driving to the next interesting location; it is very easy walking and a full birding day.



*The Rose-faced Parrot is a Choco regional endemic that we will look for at Rio Silanche Bird Sanctuary.
Photograph by participant Doug Clarke.*

Choco lowlands—The great rainforest that once cloaked all of the lowlands and foothills of northwestern Ecuador and western Colombia—known as the Choco (with an accent on the final “o”)—is one of the wettest rainforests in the world. Sadly, most of the easily accessible lowland forest in western Ecuador has been cleared or converted to oil palm plantations, leaving small patches here and there. Birding in these patches is a bit like birding on an island, a very rich island, with an avifauna primarily of Middle American (more specifically, Panamanian) affinities, but with some South American specialties tossed in. We plan to spend one day sampling the riches of such patches of lowland tropical forest, one of which is now protected as the Rio Silanche Bird Sanctuary, which offers a sturdy canopy tower and a network of forest trails. Over the years we've had good luck with some of the South American specialties here: Dusky Pigeon, Bronze-winged and Rose-faced parrots, Purple-chested Hummingbird, Blue-tailed (Choco) Trogon, Collared (Pale-

mandibled) Aracari, Guayaquil Woodpecker, Ochre-breasted, Blue-whiskered, Scarlet-browed, and Scarlet-and-white tanagers, as well as hordes of more widespread (Panama-type) species. During our half day down at this elevation we'll be watching carefully for the marvelous Long-wattled Umbrellabird.

Refugio Paz de las Aves—Here we will visit a lek where male Andean Cocks-of-the-rock (which are red west of the Andes) gather almost daily to display, promising a marvelous show for those able to get up at around dawn. We'll go early to what has become one of Ecuador's most popular birding destinations: Refugio Paz de las Aves, the reserve of "the Antpitta Whisperer." On our way back from the blind at the lek (assuming good weather), we'll hope to see Dark-backed Wood-Quail and as many as four species of antpittas—Ochre-breasted, Yellow-breasted, Moustached, and Giant—all of which have been habituated to coming out for earthworms offered by Angel and (his brother) Rodrigo Paz! If it has not been too rainy and the antpittas are responding, it's quite a show to behold. Even if the antpittas are otherwise occupied, there are sure to be some good birds at the Paz fruit feeders: such knockouts as Toucan Barbet, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, and Blue-winged and Black-chinned mountain tanagers. With luck, we could see a shy Sickie-winged Guan or White-throated Quail-Dove, a pair of Olivaceous Pihás, an Orange-breasted Fruiteater, or even the rare and aberrant White-faced Nunbird. Plus, Angel usually has a surprise or two in store. One year it was an Ocellated Tapaculo that he coaxed into view!



*The Giant Antpitta is a spectacular species found in montane forests of northwestern Ecuador.
Photograph by participant Doug Clarke.*

Itinerary for Cloudforests of Ecuador: All the Best of the Wild Northwest

Day 1, Mon, 21 Jul. Arrival in Quito. It is possible to arrange flights from Miami, Atlanta, or Houston, and our office staff can help you arrange the schedule best for you. Whenever you arrive (usually between 9:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.), our representative will meet you just outside the baggage claim and transfer you to our hotel for an overnight stay. If you are arriving tonight, be sure to check for a message from your guide with any additional information you may need for tomorrow.

If you have time, we encourage you to arrive a day or two early, especially with all of the flights being delayed or canceled lately. The late arrival of international flights from the US means that passengers don't usually get to the hotel until 10:30 p.m. at the earliest, and sometimes well after midnight. Participants on many of our Ecuador tours have recommended a relaxing day in Quito, a lovely city, to rest and begin to adjust to the 9000-foot elevation. Night in Quito.

Day 2, Tue, 22 Jul. Quito to Maquipucuna. We'll start with an early breakfast at 6:00 a.m. (Bags should be outside your room before you arrive for breakfast.) Afterwards, we'll head straight for Yanacocha and Zuroloma the west slope of the western Andean Cordillera. On the way, we will stop at the Yanacocha Reserve owned by the Fundacion Jocotoco to enjoy a box lunch and bird the unique montane forest. Our birding will be primarily on foot, walking along a road that narrows into a trail through lovely treeline forest at around 10,000-11,500 ft (3000-3500 m). We'll be moving *slowly* at these high elevations, where the weather can vary from cloudy and cold to sunny and warm. So be sure to layer up and bring rain gear (rubber boots are not necessary here but could be advisable if it is raining when you awaken). You'll also want water with you (to sip frequently), as one dehydrates easily at these high elevations. Most of our birding for the afternoon will be along little-traveled roads at subtropical and upper tropical elevations, where it can be cool if it's cloudy or rainy. For these outings you should keep your raingear with you, but we can leave rubber boots on the bus. We'll probably have a stretch and have our bus pick us up periodically. We'll let the weather dictate when we bird where; sunny days are gorgeous, but often the worst birding! Our dream is of a day with some sunshine early and late, and with overcast skies and intermittent light mist in between. We're hoping to reach our lodgings at Maquipucuna by late afternoon.

Our base at Maquipucuna is a comfortable lodge right in the middle of the forest. Meals are served in an open dining room that overlooks the lovely wild gardens and hummingbird feeders nearby. We'll probably start birding right in the gardens, checking the hummingbird feeders for lower-elevation species of the west slope. Night at Maquipucuna.

Days 3-4, Wed-Thu, 23-24 Jul. Maquipucuna. We will have breakfast at 6:00 a.m., enjoying the lodge and birding around the gardens. Then we'll set off to spend the mornings along nearby trails, coming back to lunch at the lodge. The magic of this place is that we don't have to go very far to find the birds—we will spend time birding in the forest and along a road nearby, where we will go mostly on foot. Most of the trails are easy walking, but occasionally we will have to deal with a couple of steep places, in particular if we want to look for some shy wildlife like Esmeraldas Antbird or Spectacled Bear. At this time of year, the weather should be nice and warm, but we always have to be prepared for some rain so bring rain gear for every outing; rubber boots are also important here to protect our feet and keep chiggers at bay. Night at Maquipucuna.

Day 5, Fri, 25 Jul. Maquipucuna to Guaycapi
We'll have an early breakfast at Maquipucuna and then bird en route to Guaycapi Lodge along the Old Nono Mindo road. Later we'll drive towards the stunning Tandayapa ridge looking for unusual species. The birding will mostly be along gravel roads, and we will take a box lunch. Birding in this area is always fruitful, with species such as Grass-green Tanager to entice us, as well as several species of mountain tanagers, including Hooded and Scarlet-bellied. Possibilities also include Ocellated Tapaculo and, with luck, Tanager Finch. We will arrive at Guaycapi in the afternoon with plenty of time to enjoy the feeders and some of the trails around the lodge. Night at Guaycapi.



A highlight of our 2018 tour was sighting two Spectacled Bears at Maquipucuna. While we can't guarantee that we will see bears, the chances are quite good. Photograph by participant Justin Khalifa.

Day 6, Sat, 26 Jul. Today we will have an early departure to Amagusa Reserve and Mashpi Road. We'll spend a day along an area known for fantastic Choco endemics. This gravel road descends from 6000 ft (1800 m) to 3500 ft (1000 m), with a unique diversity of birds including Moss-backed Tanager, Narino Tapaculo, Indigo Flowerpiercer, Black Solitaire, Esmeraldas Antbird, and even Long-wattled Umbrellabird. We will have a picnic breakfast and a box lunch, then bird our way back to the lodge in the afternoon. Night at Guaycapi.

Day 7, Sun, 27 Jul. Refugio Paz de las Aves. We'll go early to what has become one of Ecuador's most popular birding destinations: Refugio Paz de las Aves, the reserve of "the Antpitta Whisperer." We'll hope to see the fantastic antpitta show described above, but even if the antpitta activity is slow, there are usually many other great birds to watch for as well. It's a fabulous place! We will spend all morning here and back for lunch at the lodge. Later in the day, we will drive to our next lodge to arrive there in the afternoon. Night Sachatamia.



*The Moss-backed Tanager is found on the Pacific slope of the Andes in northern Ecuador and neighboring Colombia.
Photograph by guide Willy Perez.*

Days 8-9, Mon-Tue, 28-29 Jul. Sachatamia. We will use this lodge as our base for the next three days, as we explore different locations every day and plan our activities according to what we still hope to see and the daily weather conditions. The lodge at 1700 m (5500 ft) elevation offers a perfect place from which to access our birding spots.

We will also spend time birding around the gardens of Sachatamia, a good place to spend at least few hours, as many tanagers and hummingbirds come to the feeders and many insect-eaters come to the gardens for moths. Some of the hummingbirds are Choco endemics: Velvet-purple Coronet, Empress Brilliant, and Purple-bibbed Whitetip as examples. Later that morning, we will visit the newly enlarged Milpe Bird Sanctuary, about a half-hour away, where the mossy forest supports such specialties as Banded Puffbird, Western Woodhaunter (of the race *assimilis*), Pacific Tuftedcheek, Moss-backed and Rufous-throated tanagers, and the fabulous Club-winged and Golden-winged manakins.

A Silanche visit will take us all day to the lowlands in search of Choco endemics. We will drop down in altitude to 350 m (1000 ft) where the climate will feel more tropical and we'll have a great range of birds to look for.

Another early morning will be necessary so that we can drive down again to the lowlands for the enigmatic Long-wattled Umbrellabird. Nights at Sachatamia.

Day 10, Wed, 30 Jul. During our last day we will stay birding the whole morning at Sachatamia, have lunch here, pack it up, and we'll slowly make our way back to Quito, arriving in time for a shower and a chance to repack before enjoying a farewell dinner at our hotel. Participants may choose to leave late tonight (11 p.m. or later) on overnight flights to the States. Night in Quito or on flights home.

Day 11, Thu, 31 Jul. Departure for home. Participants staying overnight may plan to depart Quito at any time today.

About Your Guide

Willy Perez has been leading birding tours for more than 20 years. He has also worked as a resident guide at Maquipucuna Reserve on the west slopes of the Andes, on a project protecting marine turtles in Costa Rica, and on bird conservation in northwestern Ecuador. He was a resident guide at Kapawi Lodge in the Ecuadorian Amazon for three years, mastering the art of finding and identifying the many secretive birds of the lowland rainforest. He has since guided throughout Ecuador including both the east and west slopes of the Andes, the Amazon basin, the Galapagos Islands, and southern Ecuador. During the last few years, he has also guided birding groups in Chile, Argentina, Uk and France. In his free time, he trains local guides and is a frequent lecturer, in English and in Spanish, on birding and conservation issues in the Neotropics.

Willy's wife, Fiona, is British and he and his family live in England. He speaks excellent English and has an engaging and outgoing personality that makes every tour he leads a great deal of fun.

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for Willy's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

"Willy Perez was a consummate professional, and one of the best guides I've had. I can't think of a single thing he could have done better. As a college professor, I assigned grades on merit routinely. Willy Perez is the easiest A+ I've ever given!"
D.W., *Galapagos: An Intimate Look at Darwin's Islands*

Financial Information

FEE: \$4395 from Quito

(\$125 discount on one tour if combined with GALAPAGOS II)

DEPOSIT: \$450 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: January 22, 2025

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$475

LIMIT: 8

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Nicole Cannon. Nicole will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call her!

DOCUMENTS: We recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your visit, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change. You will be issued a disembarkation card by the airline to be filled out before arrival; please keep this in a safe place as you will need to submit it when you depart the country.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Ecuadorian consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: Field Guides is a full-service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees. **Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

LUGGAGE: Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is **\$4395** for one person in double occupancy from Quito. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 10, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through breakfast on Day 11 (if your flight is later in the day), all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Ecuador, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is **\$475**. (Please note that singles may be limited at some of the lodges). If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$450** per person, or see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by January 22, 2025**. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and full payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the full tour fee is non-refundable, which would include the full deposit if the final payment has not yet been paid. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs outside of our cancellation policy as published in the itinerary (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive information from us regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

NCP 7/2020

9/19NC, peg

9/20NC, peg; 1/23NC; 11/23NC; 12/23peg

9/24NC; 10/24 peg-updated