ITINERARY

AMAZONIAN ECUADOR: SACHA LODGE

January 7 – 16, 2027

Sacha Lodge has wonderful canopy towers that allow us to get views that we would not otherwise see. These Many-banded Aracaris entertained our group on a recent tour. Photograph by guide Willy Perez.

We include here information for those interested in our 2027 Field Guides Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge *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 one of our tours:

- 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 website)
- 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 and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

A few years ago, a birding trip to Amazonia was definitely for the hardy. Only those willing to do without most amenities and willing to run certain health risks could unlock the treasure chest of the single richest biome on Earth. No longer. With the opening in recent years of lodges such as Sacha in Ecuador's Amazonian forest, this incredible biological masterpiece has never been so accessible and so comfortable. Over the last decade, Sacha (a native Quechua Indian word for rainforest) has become known as one of the most comfortable and best-run lodges in upper Amazonia, and it encompasses a wide variety of rich Amazonian habitats. This tour offers a full week-long stay at a single site, affording the time necessary to probe the challenges of Amazonian forest birding while providing excellent chances to encounter some genuine rarities of considerable allure—Zigzag Heron, Harpy and Crested Eagles, Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlet,

Lanceolated Monklet, Collared Puffbird, Rufous-headed Woodpecker, Short-billed and Black-tailed Leaftosser, Dot-backed Antbird, and Orange-crowned Manakin to name a few.

Situated along the north bank of the giant Rio Napo, one of the three major tributaries that combine to form the upper Amazon, Sacha Lodge is located only two hours down-river from the Amazonian frontier town of Coca. It's accessible from Quito in a 30-minute flight over the crest of the eastern Andes (spectacular if clear). The broad meander plain between the Napo and the Aguarico River to the north is low-lying and filled with a number of blackwater inlets and classic Amazonian oxbow lakes (called *cochas* in the native Quechua dialect), overlooking one of which sits Sacha. Sacha is reached from the banks of the Napo by a thirty-minute walk along the riverbank and then on an elevated boardwalk through palm-rich swamp forest, followed by a twenty-minute ride in dugout canoes along a narrow inlet that opens onto picturesque Pilchicocha. On the opposite bank stands the lodge itself, our base for exploring the many habitats of Amazonia. A network of trails from the lodge offers easy (if sometimes muddy!) access to a wonderful expanse of seasonally flooded forest (*varzea*) and to one of the finest canopy platforms we have encountered anywhere, opening a whole new dimension to formerly earth-bound birders.

To reach Sacha Lodge, we'll take a canoe trip down the Napo River, and take a boardwalk through the forest, so you'll want to keep your binoculars handy! Photograph by participant Robert Polkinghorn.

Even on the north bank, pockets of well-drained soil on somewhat higher ground support taller forest and a few species normally associated with *terra firme* (upland) forest, the richest and most complex single habitat in the world. An immense expanse of undisturbed *terra firme* lies across the Napo from Sacha in Yasuni National Park, part of the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve, a vast reservoir of wilderness. We will make at least one day-trip to the rich south bank of the Napo for a sampling of *terra firme* specialties, as well as to visit two wonderful parrot licks, one of the premier attractions of the region.

But Sacha's strengths are twofold: its canopy towers and its easy access to virtually a full range of river-created habitats, from lake margin, *Mauritia* palm swamp, river margin, and sandbars, to river-created islands, young and old. The "Orquidea trail," actually a blackwater stream that drains Pilchicocha, is one of the most enchanting canoe trails we've seen. It is narrow and perfectly reflective of the overhanging spiny palms and dark-green forest. It is hushed quiet punctuated by the occasional outburst of a Red Howler Monkey or the insistent calling of a territorial Dot-backed Antbird. We plan this tour to play to Sacha's strengths.

Sacha's bird list approaches 600 species and boasts such regularly occurring Amazonian inhabitants as Great Tinamou,(sometimes seen at roosts!), Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Slender-billed Kite, Lined Forest-Falcon, Hoatzin, Blue-

and-yellow Macaw, Crested Owl, Great and Common potoos (sometimes at day roosts), Great-billed Hermit, Green-and-rufous and American Pygmy kingfishers, White-eared, Yellow-billed, White-chinned, Purplish, and Great jacamars, Chestnut-capped,and Collared puffbirds, Yellow-billed Nunbird, Scarlet-crowned, Gilded, and Lemon-throated barbets, four species of aracaris, two big toucans, Golden-collared Toucanet, Lafresnaye's Piculet, Chestnut, Cream-colored, and Rufous-headed woodpeckers, White-bellied and Parker's spinetails (river island specialists), Short-billed and Black-tailed leaftossers, Long-billed Woodcreeper, Castelnau's Antshrike and Black-and-white Antbird (both on river islands), Dugand's Antwren, White-shouldered, Sooty, Spot-backed, Dot-backed, and Common Scale-backed antbird, Rusty-belted Tapaculo, White-browed Purpletuft, Plum-throated and Spangled cotingas, displaying Wire-tailed and Golden-headed manakins, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet and Yellow-browed Tody-Flycatcher (both regulars to the canopy tower tree), Mottle-backed Elaenia, Rufous-tailed Flatbill, Cinnamon Attila, White-winged, Black-capped, and Pink-throated becards, Black-capped Donacobius, Scaly-breasted Wren, Lawrence's Thrush (a great mimic), Wing-barred Seedeater (a split from Variable), and a dazzling array of tanagers, many of which can be seen eye-to-eye from the canopy towers, including Masked Crimson, Turquoise, Paradise, Green-and-gold, Yellow-bellied, Masked, Opal-rumped, Opal-crowned, as well as three dacnises and three honeycreepers.

Additional but less predictable lures are Agami Heron, Harpy and Crested Eagles, Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle, Lined Forest-Falcon, Black-banded Crake, Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlet (across the Napo), Long-tailed Potoo, Gould's Jewelfront, Black-bellied Thorntail, Lanceolated Monklet, Orange-fronted Plushcrown, Fulvous Antshrike, Yellow-browed, and White-plumed antbirds, Black-spotted Bare-eye, Orange-eyed Flycatcher, Purple-throated Cotinga, Amazonian Umbrellabird (we've seen it displaying from the canopy platform!), Striolated Manakin, Large-billed Seed-Finch, and Yellow-shouldered Grosbeak, all of which we have encountered during past tours. We're sure to see an impressive array of fascinating birds and scenery. Combining the tour checklist with Ridgely and Greenfield's *The Birds of Ecuador* makes preparation for the most likely species easy. *(In addition, once you reach Sacha, you may buy a simple-but-functional, lightweight field pamphlet illustrating the birds; it's perfect for carrying in the field!)*

The canopy towers and walkway offer a chance to get up where the birds are, where we'll see such beauties as this Plum-throated Cotinga. Photograph by participant Jeanette Shores.

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 & WALKING**: Good amounts of walking (2-4 miles per day) along trails, some of which will be on even ground, but most of which are narrow, uneven, and muddy, with obstacles such as tree roots. One trail into taller terra firme forest has a steep, slippery section. The day that we go to the river island could be challenging, especially if the level of the river is low. Walking sticks can be useful. A few of the trails cross permanently wet areas on narrow bridges with the help of either handrails or poles stuck in the mud.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES**: We use boats and canoes for transport almost daily, and so an ability to climb into and out of the boat onto a dock or riverbank (in some cases via the bow, the front of the boat) is necessary. We bird from a canopy tower accessed by 14 flights of stairs. A long wooden boardwalk between the Rio Napo and the lake n our way to the lodge is usually very slippery.
- **PACE**: After breakfast (usually at 5:00 a.m.), we bird until lunchtime. At least two days we will pack a picnic lunch to extend our time in the field, but we usually return to the lodge for lunch. Normally, weather permitting, we bird again after lunch following a short siesta. On several evenings, we'll also try for nocturnal birds, though we usually do not venture out after dinner.
- **WEATHER**: Temperatures will range from the 60s at night to the 90s F during the day. Rain showers are likely, but weather is highly variable.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS**: Participants should be prepared to make comfort stops in nature, as there are no other options when away from our lodging.
- **OPTING OUT**: As we stay at the same lodging for this tour, participants can easily opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day.

We plan to spend a couple of mornings and at least one afternoon birding from the fabulous canopy platforms. The primary canopy tower is a sturdy metal platform 130 feet up among the spreading limbs of a giant ceiba tree. Reached by a railed stairway that spirals up alongside the trunk of a canopy giant, it is large and more than sturdy enough for eleven birders and a couple of scopes and offers 360 degrees of viewing—out over the rainforest canopy and back to the Rio Napo. This modern structure provides plenty of room for maneuvering, with two primary platforms from which to bird. Watching the procession of aracaris, puffbirds, honeycreepers, tanagers, cotingas, parrots, raptors, and mixed-species flocks from this platform is usually one of the highlights of the tour. The other three platforms, also reached by railed staircases, are metal and connected by a canopy walkway, which is about two feet wide and enmeshed on each side by sturdy netting. It swings or wobbles slightly as one walks on it, but overall it is easy to transect—and it would be impossible to fall out of it. Most of our time birding the canopy will be from the platforms themselves. We will also try to work in a visit (perhaps during an afternoon shower) to a chocolate tour, where we can see the whole process from the cocoa pot to the chocolate bar.

One of the many advantages of birding out of a single site is the flexibility afforded birders who would like to skip a planned group activity or do something (or nothing) on their own. This is certainly a happy option at Sacha; the beautiful wooden boat dock and barbeque area at the edge of the cocha make a marvelous place to hang out with a wonderful view. Please note that guests at Sacha are not allowed to swim in the open lake or walk the trail system behind the lodge without a guide, but there is a new enclosed swimming area for a safe dip into the cool, refreshing lake water.

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.

This tour may be combined with Holiday at Ecuador's Wildsumaco Lodge, December 28, 2026, – January 7, 2027.

About the Birding Areas

River-created Forest Habitats—The river has generated a mosaic of different habitats that lend richness and species diversity to Amazonia. Permanent swamp forest, often dominated by *Mauritia* palms, is found in low-lying areas of poor drainage, such as those in the broad meander plain of the Napo. Sacha is particularly rich in swamp forest. It is here that such specialties as Slender-billed Kite, Striped and Straight-billed woodcreepers, Sulphury Flycatcher, and Epaulet (Moriche) Oriole are found, as well as various aquatic species, such as Green-and-rufous Kingfisher and Rufescent Tiger-Heron. The margins of oxbow lakes contribute their own specialties—Blue-crowned Trogon, Hauxwell's Thrush, and Cinnamon Attila inhabit the lake-margin forests while Greater Anis, Lesser Kiskadees, Black-capped Donacobius, and Hoatzins may be found out in vegetation over the water edge itself.

Seasonally flooded *varzea* or transition forest is found adjacent to streams and on somewhat higher ground that has poor drainage. With its tall trees, it looks much like *terra firme* forest to the casual observer but has a lower, less diverse tree-species component that favors those plants that can tolerate being inundated for weeks, or even months, at a time. As one might expect, the bird diversity of *varzea* forest is centered in its canopy, as the understory is sometimes underwater for long periods. Many fruit-eating species favor *varzea*, including a variety of parrots and macaws and the bizarre Bare-necked Fruitcrow. In the darker understory along the edges of flooded forest, we'll seek such specialties as Dot-backed, (Varzea) Spot-backed, Silvered, Plumbeous, and White-shouldered antbirds, Orange-crowned Manakin, Rufous-tailed Flatbill, and the secretive Agami Heron.

Perhaps the jewel in Sacha's crown is its magnificent canopy platform, which gives nearly 360 degrees of visibility into and out over that biological frontier that we are just beginning to understand—the rainforest canopy. With the top limbs still forty feet overhead, the platform gives a window to a new world Before the establishment of canopy platforms, tour participants had to accept on faith their guides' assurances that the various voices and tiny movements a hundred feet overhead did indeed belong to a collection of antwrens, colorful tanagers and dacnises, foliage-gleaners, and tyrannulets. Now it is quite common to look *down* on these creatures at close range. No one has fully experienced the rainforest who has not been eye-to-eye with a Many-banded Aracari or Gilded Barbet, or thrilled to the spectacle of a pair of Scarlet Macaws winging close by in golden afternoon light.

A number of sturdy (but often slippery) boardwalks provide access to *varzea* and swamp forest, and the native boatmen are expert at maneuvering the dugout canoes on the *cochas* and other waterways. As the extremely high diversity of Amazonian birds is dependent on the large number of microhabitats available within the structural complexity of the forests, this access becomes all-important in the success of an attempt to sample this wealth of birds.

For the purposes of preparation, you can assume that most of the species listed on the checklist which are not specified below as river-island species or *terra firme* forest birds are found in these seasonally flooded forest habitats.

Amazonian River Islands—With seasonal flooding—rather unpredictable of late—Amazonian river islands are forever changing. Some are entirely washed away, while sand deposits elsewhere form incipient new islands. Sacha is located along a section of the Napo that has a fair number of established river islands, such that as conditions change, some islands are always accessible. We hope to visit an island that allows us to locate quite a good sample of birds that have evolved on these islands—indeed, some have never been found anywhere else, not even where these islands are close to similar habitats on the nearby riverbanks. Heavy rains on the precipitous eastern slopes of the Andes ensure that rivers originating there carry heavy sediment loads. This material is deposited as sandbars and islands where the terrain flattens out for the long, relatively slow flow to the Atlantic, more than 2000 miles away. The greatly varying levels of river flow ensure that vegetation along a river's banks and on islands is in a constant state of succession. The islands erode at the upstream end, and sediment is deposited at the downstream end. Thus, the old growth (woodland that can resemble mainland *varzea*) is at the head, and the youngest (bare sand and low grass growth) is at the foot of each island. The greatest number of island-specialty species is found in the earlier successional stages and includes Ladder-tailed Nightjar, Olive-spotted Hummingbird, Lesser Hornero, Parker's, White-bellied, and Plain-crowned spinetails, Black-and-white Antbird, River Tyrannulet, Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant, Orange-headed Tanager, and Oriole Blackbird. Where cane, willows, and *Tessaria* give way to cecropias and taller growth, some additional species occur that favor this older growth: Castelnau's Antshrike, White-eared Jacamar, Scarlet-crowned Barbet, Spot-breasted and Rufous-headed woodpeckers, and Spotted Tody-Flycatcher. Pied Lapwings, Collared Plovers, and Yellow-billed Terns are sometimes seen along the sandbars.

We will visit a clay lick in the forest that draws in large flocks of Cobalt-winged Parakeets as well as large Scarlet Macaws. It's an amazing experience to see and hear! Photograph by guide Willy Perez.

***Terra Firme* Forest**—South of the Napo, most of the land area above the old river terrace is covered with primary *terra firme* forest. This upland rainforest lies above the levels of the highest floods and is the single richest habitat in the world—for birds as well as for many of the other organisms found in it. By way of example, the highest diversity of trees in North America is found in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, where an expanse of about half a million acres and an altitudinal gradient of more than 5000 feet contributes to a total of around 170 species of trees. Working in the Amazonian rainforests of northeastern Peru (not far from Sacha), botanist Al Gentry found the highest tree diversity in the world—an astounding 603 species per *hectare* (two-and-one-quarter acres)! Other Amazonian rainforest sites in Peru and Ecuador, where a great deal of fieldwork has been focused over the past decade or so, have shown bird species diversities of more than 500 species per site. Given its access to both *varzea* and *terra firme* forest, there is every reason to think the diversity of the Sacha area will prove to be similar. We'll bird *terra firme* forest in pockets near Sacha and along trails across the Napo in Yasuní National Park. *Terra firme* specialties that are most often found on the south bank of the Napo include Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlet, and Orange-cheeked Parrot (they both come to an interior forest mineral lick along a trail on the south bank), Yellow-billed Jacamar, Yellow-browed, and White-plumed antbirds (with army ants), White-lored Antpitta (tough), and Striolated Manakin.

Itinerary for Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge

Day 1, Thu, 7 Jan. To 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 and 11:00 p.m.), our representative will meet you just outside the baggage claim. Watch for a sign with your name and/or Field Guides as you exit Customs. You will be transferred to the Hotel San Jose de Puembo, about 20 minutes away, where you'll check into your room. If you are arriving tonight, be sure to check for a message from your guide with any additional information you may need for tomorrow. There is a jar in your room to fill up with drinking water from a big bottle that is located in the corridor. Quito lies at 9300 feet and has a cool, pleasant climate year-round. But don't overdo it when carrying heavy bags off the plane at this elevation; it usually takes a night or so to adjust to the altitude.

If you have the time, we suggest arriving a day early. We can help you make arrangements for an English-speaking guide if you like. Night in Quito.

Day 2, Fri, 8 Jan. To Sacha Lodge. After breakfast at the hotel we will transfer to the airport for our flight to Coca, usually departing in the morning. Our 30-minute flight takes us from the inter-montane highlands of the Quito valley

across the eastern cordillera of the Andes. On a clear day you can see snow-capped Volcan Cayambe to the north, gorgeous Volcan Antisana to the east, and in the distance to the south, the perfect crater of Volcan Cotopaxi. As we descend to Ecuador's Oriente, we'll see some nice expanses of undisturbed forest where the eastern foothills spill into the Amazonian lowlands before we arrive at Coca, frontier oil town and jumping-off point for Amazonian exploration in Ecuador. We will travel dressed for birding (rubber boots not required), as we'll be birding on the river enroute and along the boardwalk between the river landing and the lodge upon arrival. (Our luggage will be transported by lodge staff so that we can be comfortably unencumbered.) The weather should be cool in Quito and warm and humid in Coca and for the duration of our stay in Amazonia.

From the Coca airport we travel ten minutes by bus to the Sacha headquarters near the river dock. Bathrooms are available here, and we will have a light snack before heading downriver. At the dock we'll transfer to a motorized, covered canoe for the two-hour trip down river to the lodge. Upon landing, we'll carry only what we want for birding. Bathrooms are available below a sheltered observation deck near the landing. Slightly elevated and overlooking a pasture at the edge of forest, the covered deck affords good viewing, and we may want to start birding here. Numerous species are possible—from White-eared Jacamar and Mottle-backed Elaenia to Black-billed Thrush and Swallow Tanager. We'll continue along a trail and then a boardwalk—a thirty-minute walk through swamp forest, where an active troop of Guianan Squirrel Monkeys could interrupt our progress. From the end of the boardwalk, it is a twenty-minute trip by dugout canoe across the Pilchicocha lagoon to the lodge, where we'll be received in the bar with a welcome drink and an orientation talk. We should sleep tonight to the songs of frogs and the mellow whistling of the Tawny-bellied Screech-Owl. Night at Sacha Lodge.

On the trails, we'll keep watch for gems like the brilliant Wire-tailed Manakin. Photograph by participant Jeanette Shores.

Days 3-8, Sat-Thu, 9-14 Jan. Sacha Lodge. We'll start early each morning to take advantage of the precious first hours of maximum activity, but we will have some time for resting (during the heat of midday or the occasional rain shower) and individual exploration near the lodge as well. Much of our birding will be on foot on forest trails. As with all rainforest birding, calf-high rubber boots and raingear will be essential. Not only are there likely to be muddy areas on the trails, but rubber boots also provide foot and lower leg protection against briars, insects, and other trail hazards. Sacha has a large number of Ecuadorian rubber boots, with an array of sizes that include large men's sizes, so that you don't need to bring your own, but you probably will want insoles to fit inside them. And you are welcome to bring your own boots if you prefer. Some downed trees across trails are inevitable.

We will bird the lake margins, areas of flooded forest, and the river from dugout canoes handled by skilled native boatmen. Some birding hikes will begin with a canoe ride as well, as a few trails are only reachable by boat. Birding hikes will mostly be conducted in the morning hours with a return for lunch, but we may arrange for a carry-along lunch to

enable us to cover some of the more distant trails, especially across the Napo. We will arrange to spend time on several days and at various times of the day in the canopy platforms so that we can take full advantage of this fantastic resource. Nights at Sacha Lodge.

Day 9, Fri, 15 Jan. Departure from Sacha; flight to Quito. Today, we'll rise early and have breakfast before embarking for Coca and the (usually) morning flight to Quito, arriving there in time to reorganize and clean up before our farewell dinner. Participants flying home on Delta, United, or American Airlines may choose to book flights departing near midnight tonight, but will still have room for showering before the overnight flight. Night in Quito or on the flight home.

Day 10, Sat, 16 Jan. Departure for home. American Airlines flights to the US generally depart in the morning and require an early check-in to arrive mid-day in time for connections home. *Vayan bien!*

About Your Guides

Jesse Fagan (a.k.a. the Motmot or just "Mot") has been at Field Guides since 2006. Jesse has experience in many areas of the world including Central and South America, Europe, and Africa. Mot likes to think he can bird anywhere at any time and still show you the birds, but most importantly, a good time.

In 2016, he published the ***Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America*** with co-author Oliver Komar.

When not guiding, Jesse enjoys working out, training jiu-jitsu, creating music, and reading. He holds a B.S. and an M.S. in mathematics from Texas Tech University and lives in Lima, Peru, with his wife.

> *"**Jesse Fagan** is a first-rate guide, combining a great ear and eyes with a congenial personality. He manages the group well while being fun to be with. His organization skills matched his birding skills." C.B.; Peruvian Rainforests of the Tambopata*

Visit https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/ for Jesse's complete tour schedules; just click on his photo.

Financial Information

FEE: $5725 from Quito
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): $2100 (Singles are limited at Sacha Lodge.)
DEPOSIT: $575 per person
FINAL PAYMENT DUE: July 11, 2026
LIMIT: 8

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for both tours 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!

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations at Sacha are very comfortable, in fact probably *the* most comfortable overall of any Ecuadorian rainforest lodge. The cabanas are built of mixed materials with electric lighting and hot-water showers in modern, tiled private bathrooms. Nights are pleasant in an amazingly insect-free environment with A/C and well-screened rooms. Sacha offers the comforts of good food in two well-located areas; at La Balsa, food is attractively prepared and served buffet-style for breakfast and lunch, while at the beautiful new restaurant, there is a 3-choice set menu for dinner. A full-service bar with a unique observation deck provides all the amenities along with a superb view. Free bottled water is always available, and fresh-pureed juices from tropical fruits of the region are provided with meals. Bottled soft drinks, beer, wine, and liquor are available at an additional charge from the bar. The generator, located at a distance so as not to intrude, operates all night long, so lights and plugs to recharge electrical items are available.
A limited number of singles are available at Sacha Lodge.

DOCUMENTS: Be sure to verify the latest entry requirements for each country you will visit or transit.

Passport: A current passport is required for international travel. It should be in good condition, valid for at least 6 months beyond your return date, and have at least one blank page for each country on your itinerary.

Visa: No visa is required for U.S. and Canadian citizens. Non-US citizens should consult the consulates of each destination for current entry requirements.

VACCINATIONS: It is recommended that all travelers to Sacha Lodge provide **proof of yellow fever vaccination** upon arrival at the airport at Coca, although this has not been enforced in recent years. Previously, the vaccine was considered good for ten years. As of July 2016, the vaccine is considered valid for the lifetime of the individual, according to the CDC. Despite these recent changes, it is uncertain whether all countries will adopt this change. Please consult with your physician about whether it is appropriate for you to receive the vaccine or the 10-year booster (there are contraindications for some individuals).

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: This tour begins and ends in Quito, Ecuador (Mariscal Sucre International Airport, UIO.)

Arrival: Quito, January 7. 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 and 11:00 p.m.), our representative will meet you just outside the baggage claim.

Departure: Quito, January 16; American Airlines flights to the US generally depart in the morning and require an early check-in to arrive mid-day in time for connections home.

Please wait to purchase airline tickets until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate. At that time, we'll be glad to assist with your flight arrangements at no service fee.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is $5725 for one person in double occupancy from Quito. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 9, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through dinner on Day 9 (or breakfast on Day 10 if you overnight), the flights within Ecuador (Quito/Coca/Quito), 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 $2100 for those requesting a single room. 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 electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please send your deposit of $575 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 July 11, 2026**. We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.

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.

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 LIMITS: Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open. However, on occasion, we will send along a guide in training on a tour. In these cases one seat in the van or bus will be taken by the guide in training. Our guides will have a rotation system within the vehicle so that clients share the inconvenience equally. We hope this minor inconvenience will be more than offset by the advantages of having another guide along.

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 purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to protect your investment in case of injury or illness to you or an immediate family member before or during a trip. Because we must remit early and substantial deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer refunds for cancellations outside of our Cancellation Policy. If a participant is unable to join or continue a tour due to illness, all related expenses will be their responsibility, and no refunds can be issued for missed days. Please wait to purchase insurance until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate, as most policies are non-refundable.

For full details, visit our Trip Cancellation Insurance page at https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/.

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 matters 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
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Updated 10/26peg