JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

SIGNATURE ECUADOR AND GALAPAGOS: VOLCANOES TO THE OCEAN

14 days from **£7,520pp**

ECUADOR & GALAPAGOS ISLANDS / GALAPAGOS ISLANDS / QUITO / OTAVALO AND THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS / AVENUE OF THE VOLCANOES / CUENCA / GUAYAQUIL



WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

Top quality comprehensive holiday with the highlights of Ecuador and a cruise around the Galápagos Islands. Includes Quito, Otavalo market and the Avenue of Volcanoes, the gracious colonial city of Cuenca and a small first class small motor vessel.

DAY 1	**Arrive in Quito and transfer to hotel.**
DAY 2	**Guided walking tour of colonial Quito.**
DAY 3	**By road to Otavalo in the Andean highlands, visit Otavalo market overnight in hacienda.**
DAY 4	**Guided excursions to Lake Cuicocha**
DAY 5	**By road along the Avenue of the Volcanoes; visit Cotopaxi National Park, overnight at a hacienda.**
DAY 6	**Visit local artisan markets, overnight in Riobamba.**
DAY 7	**Continue via Ingapirca ruins to Cuenca.**
DAY 8	**At leisure in colonial Cuenca, Ecuador's second city.**
DAY 9	**By road down to Las Cajas National Park, then fly to Quito.**
DAY 10	**Fly to the Galápagos Islands**
DAYS 11-13	**Land excursions from the cruise around the Galápagos Islands.**
DAY 14	**Fly to the mainland, connect with international flight home.**

ITINERARY

An opportunity to combine a luxurious cruise in the Galápagos Islands with exploration of the Andean landscapes of their host country, Ecuador.

Travel to Quito: Ecuador's capital surrounded by snow-capped mountains and active volcanoes. Explore Quito and go south along the Avenue of the Volcanoes via the Inca ruins of Ingapirca to the beautiful colonial city of Cuenca and the upland wilderness of Las Cajas National Park.

Fly from the port of Guayaquil to the Galápagos Islands for a 5-day cruise. It was on a similar trip 200 years ago that Darwin returned to the archipelago to write the seminal book 'On the Origin of Species'. Step into his shoes and explore the diversity of land and marine life which inhabit these enchanting islands. A holiday in the Galápagos is a totally unique experience, inevitably rewarding, richly educational, blissfully tranquil, and photogenic.

You'll sail on a first class, compact motor cruiser offering an intimate and informal atmosphere favoured by those who prefer the laid-back approach of smaller craft. You will have ample opportunity to make new friends among people with shared interests. In addition to landings on the islands you will have the opportunity to snorkel or swim with sea-lions.

DAY 1

Arrive in Quito and transfer to hotel.



Transfer to your hotel in Quito, the Andean capital of Ecuador. The active volcano Guagua Pichincha, to the east, glowers over the dynamic city which, at 2,850m, is one of highest capital cities in the world. Quito is divided into two contrasting districts. The modern zone is characterised by towering glass buildings and houses banks, international companies, hotels, shops and restaurants, while the central colonial area has well-conserved and recently spruced-up white-washed architecture, open air markets and graceful Spanish-style mansions and churches.

DAY 2

Guided walking tour of colonial Quito.



Guided walking tour of old Quito. Visit the colonial centre of the capital, the first city ever to be named a World Heritage site. High on the agenda is a walk through the main plaza, the Plaza de Independencia, where you will see the government palace, the cathedral, and some of the most important churches built around the 16th and 17th centuries, including the monastery of San Francisco.

DAY 3

By road to Otavalo in the Andean highlands, visit Otavalo market overnight in hacienda.



By road through rolling highland moors to Otavalo, a prosperous town set in a pretty landscape of lakes and volcanoes. The town hosts one of the largest and most vibrant indigenous markets in South America. Stalls are laden with tapestries and woollen goods, some intricate, some brash, and all in a breath-taking array of colours, as well as traditional musical instruments and leather goods. You're bound to find something to take home.

Overnight in a traditional colonial hacienda, adapted to receive visitors but retaining many of its historic features.

DAY 4

Guided excursions to Lake Cuicocha



Morning at leisure on the hacienda, which has lovely flowery grounds in which to relax. In the afternoon, drive to Cotacachi Cayapas Ecological Reserve for the start of a 3hr hike on the volcanic rim around Cuicocha, a deep-blue crater lake with an island marooned in the centre set on the southern flanks of Mount Cotacachi. Enjoy fine views of the surrounding volcanoes Cayambe and Imbabura.

The countryside is extremely pretty, with adobe farmsteads sheltering under columns of silvery eucalyptus shading ancient cobbled lanes and tracks. Birdlife that can be spotted includes ruddy ducks, giant hummingbirds and silvery grebes. After the hike, stop at the picturesque colonial town of Cotacachi, famous for its leather work before heading back to Quito.

DAY 5

By road along the Avenue of the Volcanoes; visit Cotopaxi National Park, overnight at a hacienda.



Travel south from Quito by road on a spellbinding journey along the aptly named Avenue of Volcanoes. As its name implies, the route passes an imperial guard of conical snow-draped volcanic cones, surrounded by lush pastures pitted with colonial market towns and tiny indigenous villages.

Visit Cotopaxi National Park, dominated by the superbly photogenic volcano of the same name (5,897m), a (very) occasionally active peak of shimmering ice surrounded by rumpled skirts of highland moor with a tundra-like vegetation of altitude-resistant shrubs and flowers. The park is inhabited by over 90 species of bird from pocket-sized hummingbirds to giant condors and a variety of hardy mammals including deer, rabbits, Andean foxes, and puma, which shelter from view in the lacy veils of frequent swirly mists. You'll visit the interpretation centre and walk the trail surrounding the stunningly reflective Lake Limpiopungo, ringed by bird-filled reed beds. If inspired to hike some more, you can climb towards the Cotapaxi snowline for bird's-eye views over the Andean peaks.

DAY 6

Visit local artisan markets, overnight in Riobamba.



There's a lot to do at your hacienda – if you have a penchant for the outdoors, you can go horse riding, mountain biking, zip-lining, hiking (self-guided) on well-marked trails or get involved in farm-based activities. Children are invited to make chocolate and help feed the animals too.

You can also visit some nearby local markets, often robust and vivacious focal points of trade between purveyors of produce from the outlying farms and hamlets. There may be a few tourist items, but these markets have their own socio-economic dynamic and are a fascinating insight into Ecuador's rural life.

Continue to Riobamba for the night.

DAY 7

Continue via Ingapirca ruins to Cuenca.



Depart Riobamba heading south for the 2hr drive to Alausi. This little highland town (2,340m) would escape under the radar were it not a famous stop along the railway track crossing the Andes from Quito to Guayaquil on the Pacific coast. The most ambitious and spectacular part – named for its audacity as the Devil's Nose – was restored for visitors and begins right here.

The train does not operate on Mondays, Tuesdays or Wednesdays, but on other days of the week it is possible to ride onboard as the train makes its way down the scenic mountainside to Simbambe. It is an enthralling journey and a highly impressive fete of engineering.

Continue by private vehicle to Cuenca, via Ecuador's principal Inca ruins of Ingapirca. The remains of the buildings in this raised site date back to the end of the 15th century, before the Spanish conquistadores. The architecture bears hallmarks of Inca construction, with some fine mortar-less stonework. Archaeologists believe that the main structure, known as The Temple of the Sun, was used for religious and ceremonial purposes. Today, however, it simply provides welcome shade for grazing llamas and the occasional tourist.

Cuenca is a beautiful 16th-century town, built on the site of an ancient Inca settlement, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

DAY 8

At leisure in colonial Cuenca, Ecuador's second city.



At leisure in Cuenca. Its narrow cobblestoned streets, red tiled roofs and well-preserved Romanesque buildings give it an air of sedate and quiet respectability. It's a peaceful place to wander around, with coffee shops and interesting little shops. The colonial centre has been beautifully restored; colourful flowers tumble from ironwork balconies and the whitewashed houses have grand wooden doors. The climate here is temperate and you'll enjoy relaxing with a coffee in a leafy square.

Cuenca is a great place to wander or relax in but if you want to get out of the city you could visit the nearby market towns of Gualaceo, Chordeleg, and colonial Sigsig, set in the foothills of the western cordillera.

DAY 9

By road down to Las Cajas National Park, then fly to Quito.

From Cuenca drive for just 30 minutes to reach Las Cajas National Park, a vast wilderness of high páramo and boxed lakes. Its tundra, jagged peaks and many glacial lakes have a rugged, eerie beauty. After exploring the park, return to Cuenca and drop off the car before taking a flight to Quito where you will overnight near the airport.



DAY 10

Fly to the Galápagos Islands

Transfer to the airport for your flight to the Galápagos Islands where you will embark your vessel for your 5-day cruise around the archipelago. Your naturalist guide will be waiting to take you to the quayside.



DAYS 11-13

Land excursions from the cruise around the Galápagos Islands.

The Galápagos Islands emerged in the Pacific Ocean 6 million years ago following a spate of volcanic activity and, isolated from the continental mainland, have become home to unique plant and animal species. Without fear of humans, they are sufficiently trusting to allow you to approach them and observe them up close. The islands were the inspiration for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, which formed the basis for his revolutionary book 'On the Origin of Species', published in 1859.



Although geologically constantly on the move, these islands remain suspended in time, with Giant tortoises, iguanas, penguins, Frigate birds, Waved albatross and Blue-footed boobies and a wealth of rare flora all thriving there. For many, the fascinating and unique wildlife and natural beauty of the islands are matched by the thrill of being at sea. Find a spot on deck as you make your way through the ocean, often trailed by flocks of birds and playful dolphins.

The itinerary for your days in the Galápagos will depend on your date of departure,and is subject to change. There are normally two landings a day to seek out the different wildlife that inhabits the islands.

DAY 14

Fly to the mainland, connect with international flight home.

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Walking tour of colonial Quito
- Visit Otavalo market
- Cuicocha volcanic lake walk
- Visit Cotopaxi National Park
- See traditional Andean markets
- Visit Ingapirca Inca ruins
- Explore Cajas National Park
- 4 night cruise in the Galapagos Islands

ESSENTIALS

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS
14 days, 13 nights: Quito 2, Otavalo 1, Quito 1, Cotopaxi 1, Riobamba 1, Cuenca 2, Quito 1, Galápagos 4.

ACCOMMODATION
We use a mix of hotel standards from mid-range upwards, choosing accommodation we think is great value, comfortable, well-located and which showcases a touch of local character. Properties will vary in heritage from modern to traditional-style countryside properties (haciendas). but will all be well-equipped with rooms that have private bathrooms. In the Galápagos you'll be on a 16-passenger motor yacht. All mainland accommodation is flexible and can be tailored to meet your specific preferences and requirements.

TRANSPORT
2 flights (longest 2hrs); 5-day cruise.

MEALS
Breakfast daily; Lunch days 5, 6, 7, 9; Dinner days 3, 10; Full Board 11-13.

GUIDES
Our local, trusted and carefully selected partners understand the expectations of our customers very well, and their staff and guides are consistently singled out for praise by clients on their return. On this holiday, you will be joined by different guides for each activity and or region, ensuring you benefit from specialised expertise and knowledge, often from someone local to the area.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS
As well as any included activities, this Private Journey includes some free time for optional excursions. As optional excursions are often subject to availability, we recommend you discuss and arrange them with your Travel Expert as early as possible before you depart.

ALTITUDE
Several days are spent at high altitude (over 2500m) in Quito, The Avenue of the Volcanoes and Cuenca. Please refer to the Country Information page or your briefing dossier, for further information on altitude, including how to avoid and treat altitude sickness.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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