

Program name	PRE-TOUR TMLA	Ref. No.	
No. of Passengers	Ranging	Sales Agent	Veronica Rosero
Travel dates	September 09-13, 2017	Date of Issue	Tuesday, 04 July, 2017

ITINERARY DESCRIPTION

Ecuador

A natural selection, only a Continent could give you more!

Day 1 September 09 - QUITO

(-/-/-)

Quito Transfers in - airport/hotel

Welcome to Quito and Ecuador!. At the airport you will be greeted by a member of our organization, we will escort you all the way to your hotel, giving you a short briefing about Quito and the country in general with valuable information you need to know. Enjoy scenic colonial and artistic Quito, visit museums, monasteries and the golden altars of its many churches. Stand with a foot on each hemisphere on the Middle of the World memorial. The capital of Ecuador has a setting that few cities in the world can match. During the 13th century it was the prosperous center of the Kingdom of Quitus. It later became the northern capital of the Inca Empire. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Colonial architects built formidable temples, monasteries and mansions, creating an urban jewel designated by UNESCO/UN as a World Cultural Heritage Site. Quito's artistic creativity awaits the visitor in cosmopolitan galleries and boutiques filled with contemporary paintings, sculptures and exquisite traditional crafts. Overnight at Hotel Casa Gangotena in a Luxury room



Day 2 September 10 - MASHPI

(B/L/D)

Mashpi 3 days / 2 nights Itinerary



MASHPI RESERVE

The adventure begins in Ecuador's heritage capital, Quito, at our 8 AM pick-up time for guests staying in Quito's main hotels (Time will be confirmed by our Operations Department). Mashpi Reserve, a 1,300 hectare (3,200 acres) conservation property located within the Metropolitan District of Quito, forms a part of the Ecuadorian Choco rainforest, known as one of the world's greatest biodiversity hotspots. The sudden shift in altitude (from 2800 masl to 1000 masl) will allow us to discover the spectacular natural diversity of the Andean landscape as we travel through the dry valley of Pomasqui towards the cordillera's western flank, into lush, misty cloud forest, and finally reach Mashpi.

After been comfortably settled in our room we are greeted by one of our naturalists who will give us an introductory talk about the cloud forest and its conservation, the activities during our stay and some helpful tips about what to wear and what to bring to the excursions. This talk will take place before lunch at our library and lasts around 30 minutes.

At 3:30 PM we will gather together at the lobby in order to head to the Napa Trail. This trail starts at the side of the road, across areas where the forest is regenerating and large patches of pristine forest. For this reason, this trail is ideal to explain the ecological succession processes and the importance of forest conservation for the Chocó region. Also, this is a trail of great scenic beauty and toward the end of the trail you will find one of the unique attractions, a forest of "iron palm" (*Iriartea deltoidea*), which wood is used in different ways, mostly in house construction. This is also a very good trail for bird watching. It is a moderate difficulty trail and the excursion takes 2 hours.

Every evening for all our guests interested in knowing more deeply the cloud forest ecology, we have prepared a series of different lectures like the "Secret Wildlife of Mashpi, the trap camera project", the "Chocó, a biological hotspot" about the formation and diversity of the Chocó, or about our scientific research projects. The lectures will be given by one of our naturalist or our resident biologist at 7:30 PM.

Overnight at Mashpi Lodge – Wayra Room

Day 3 September 11 - MASHPI

(B/L/D)



The forest always rewards the “early birds”, as the dawn light lures a variety of fascinating species in their search for food. A good place to find birds is actually right at the hotel’s terrace, with a cup of fresh coffee, tea or hot chocolate in hand, from where we can enjoy not only the beauty of the forest but also the many species that come to feed on insects and fruits at nearby trees. Our guides will help us spot what’s around, offering a peek inside their telescope for a close-and-personal view of the incredible bird richness Mashpi possesses. This activity begins at 6:30 AM and lasts about an hour. Enjoy breakfast at our hotel restaurant. We depart around 8:30 AM to the Sky Bike and Observation Tower (a 15-minute walk from the hotel). Looming above the treetops, Mashpi’s observation tower allows our guests to enjoy the protected forest in all its glory. At 30 meters (100 feet) above the ground, this is an ideal site for nature lovers, allowing us not only allows to appreciate the forest’s complex structure, but also the incredible species richness that thrives throughout the canopy (70% of the forest’s biodiversity is found here). We climb 162 steps to reach the top. The aerial bicycle makes for an original and exciting way to explore the canopy up close. Designed for two people to use at once, one person pedals the bike along a cable stretched between two points, around 200 mt (655 feet) apart, crossing a gorge and river. Silent, easy-to-use and fun, it’s an activity that provides guests with yet another vantage point to experience Mashpi’s lush natural world. To enjoy the ride, one must be at least one meter tall (3.2 feet) (children must be accompanied by an adult). The bike ride takes no more than 20 minutes. Once completed, you can walk back to the lodge along one of our many trails. One of the trails takes us to San Vicente waterfall, a 45-minutes-to-an-hour steep hike that demands good physical condition. You can also hike the Oxibelis trail that takes us to a small waterfall before taking us back to the lodge. The combination of activities (sky bike, observation tower and hike) can take between 2 to 4 hours, depending on the trail. At the lodge, a refreshing natural juice and fresh towels will be waiting for us; we then will enjoy a varied and delicious lunch at the hotel restaurant. The best way to reach the Life Centre is actually through the forest, so we take what we’ve come to call the “Howler Monkey’s trail”. This path crosses primary forest dominated by many ancient trees, being the “copal” (*Dacryodes cupularis*) the most emblematic of them.

We occasionally get to listen to rare birds, such as the Rufous-fronted Wood-quail (*Odontophorus erythrops*) or the Rufous-crowned Antpitta (*Pittasoma rufopileatum*). Our guides are keen on noticing every sound that comes from the forest deep, hoping to reveal colourful birds or elusive howler monkeys, while our naturalist guide explains the habitat’s ecology; both share with us their extensive knowledge on forest plants and their medicinal uses. Once at the Life Centre, we are offered a great view of the forest from the comfort of

an expansive wooden deck, where wildlife abounds. We will identify the different birds and mammals that visit our fruit feeders. The centre is conceived as a place for learning and discovery, but also a place where guests can disconnect from the humdrum of today's world. We will explore the life of butterflies, the many species found in the Mashpi area and their metamorphosis process from egg, larva and caterpillar, to chrysalis and finally winged wonder. We will also discover various species of host plants that butterflies use to lay their eggs on, such as passion flowers, birds of paradise, milk weeds and other species found in the garden. Not far from the Centre, we have also established a "tropical orchard" where many varieties of fruit trees, including banana, manioc, cacao, hot chili pepper, coffee and wild raspberries are grown. For those interested in learning more about the Ecuadorian cloud forest, we offer a lecture that sums up the different scientific research projects that take place at Mashpi. The talk lasts around 30 minutes, and will include footage from our hidden camera traps, a great display of the astounding diversity that thrives inside the forest.

Day 4 September 12 - MASHPI

(B/L/-)



This activity begins at 6:30 AM in the hotel lobby and takes advantage of the fact that many bird species come to the hotel to feed. After a cup of coffee, we walk down the road seeking out mixed-species feeding flocks: these usually feature different insectivorous bird species that move together while foraging. In a single flock, we may see over 20 different species, making these more-or-less common encounters an undeniable treat for bird aficionados. The activity takes one hour; we return to the lodge for breakfast.

Approximately at 8:30 AM we leave the hotel and head to Copal Waterfall. This beautiful 2-hour-long hike features a landscape of moss-covered trees, bromelias and orchids at every corner. The trail ends at a spectacular waterfall over 50 m high. We return to the hotel by noon for check out and enjoy our last meal at Mashpi before heading back to Quito at approximately 1:30 PM.

Overnight at Casa Gangotena – Luxury Room

Day 5 September 13 - QUITO

(B/L/-)

Today you will have your departure transfer for your flight to Guayaquil for the TMLA.

RATES

NET RATES PER PERSON IN US DOLLARS FOR BUYERS ONLY:			SGL Accomodation		DBL Accomodation	
Date	Service	Description	SGL		DBL	
Sat. Sept 09 to Wed. Sept 13	PRE TMLA	5D/4N program including Mashpi Lodge and hotel Casa Gangotena	US\$	700.00	US\$	600.00
LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE						

Additional fees involved net per person		Net p/person
Dragonfly	Dragonfly at Mashpi Lodge	48.80

INCLUDED

Accomodations
All meals
Guided daily excursion to primary forest
Specialized lectures
Rain ponchos and rubber boots
Shared base transfers in/out

NOT INCLUDED

Dragonfly
Bar
Personal expenses
Gratuities

CONTACT INFORMATION

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