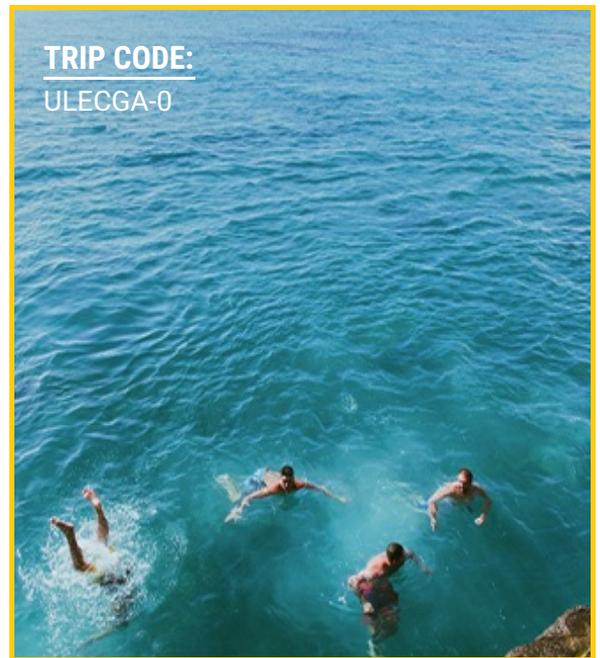


Topdeck

ECUADOR & GALÁPAGOS



TRIP CODE:
ULECGA-0

TOPDECKER, meet Latin America

Sick of expecting the whole package only to end up disappointed AF? Well stop swiping cos' unlike your recent Tinder matches, this 14 day trip around Ecuador and the Galápagos islands delivers on every mind-numbingly awesome detail. Seriously. From the cultural splendor of Quito to the rustic Andean homestays of Yunguilla, the lush rainforests of the Amazon to the wildlife-rich otherworldly islands of Galápagos – this place blows expectations out of the water. Add to your cart and let the adventure begin.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Limited Editions



Nights



Android/iPhone
app download
info



This is a principal
package.

HI, and thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

HI, AND THANKS FOR CHOOSING TO HOLIDAY WITH TOPDECK!

You can rest assured that we'll pull out all the stops to make your trip unforgettable.

Now it's time to get excited about your holiday...

ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – including where to meet and what to bring. We recommend that you read these notes thoroughly so you know what to expect on your trip of a lifetime. Also, you can easily download and print this document off so you can bring it with you when you travel.

Please bear in mind that some points should be taken as a guide only – after all, everyone's different! For example, daily spending money and clothing lists can vary from one person to the next, so don't be alarmed if you don't expect to spend (or even wear) so much!

PLEASE NOTE: We strongly urge you to refresh this document as close to the time of your departure as possible to ensure you have the most up-to-date accommodation list and information available.

ON THE BUCKET LIST (INCLUDED)

- + Orientation tour of Quito
- + Chocolate tasting experience in Quito
- + Visit Equatorial Line Monument
- + Yunguilla Community experience
- + Overnight stay with local Yunguilla family
- + Visit El Chocal viewpoint
- + Visit the Papallacta hot springs
- + Guided hike through the jungle
- + Visit a local Kichwa community
- + Visit the Amazoónico rescue centre
- + Craft-making experience in Misahualli
- + Orientation tour of Baños
- + Visit the Cotopaxi National Park
- + Visit the Charles Darwin Station
- + Full day boat excursion in the Galápagos Islands
- + Visit the highlands of Santa Cruz
- + Tasting experience at the first brewery on Sata Cruz
- + Flights to and from the Galápagos Islands

MORE INCLUSIONS

- + Airport transfer
- + Orientation tour of Quito
- + Chocolate tasting experience
- + Visit Equatorial Line Monument
- + Yunguilla Community experience
- + Overnight stay with local Yunguilla family
- + Hike to El Chocal viewpoint
- + Visit the Papallacta hot springs
- + Guided hike through the jungle
- + Visit a local Kichwa community
- + Visit the Amazoónico rescue centre
- + Craft-making experience
- + Orientation tour of Baños
- + Visit the Cotopaxi National Park
- + Airport transfers
- + Flight from Quito to Galápagos Islands
- + Visit the Charles Darwin Station

- + Full day boat excursion
- + Visit the highlands of Santa Cruz
- + Tasting experience at the first brewery on Santa Cruz
- + Airport transfer from hotel to Baltra airport
- + Flight from Galápagos to Guayaquil

YOUR TRIP WILL START

PICK UP:

Quito
Ecuador

YOUR TRIP WILL FINISH

DROP OFF:

Guayaquil
Ecuador

TRIP CURRENCIES

- + Ecuador -

YOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 | QUITO, ECUADOR

Set high in the Andes at the foot of a volcano surrounded by hills and snow-capped mountains, Quito is the U-L-T-I-M-A-T-E place to start your South American adventure. Take in the views from the air before you touchdown at Mariscal Sucre airport. CBF finding a taxi? We've got you covered – spot your airport transfer in the crowd, sit back and enjoy the ride to our fresh AF accommodation. Tonight, mingle with like-minded travelers in the hostel basement lounge or hit the pavement in search of some mouthwatering street food. Vamonos!



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Airport transfer

DAY 2 | QUITO

You got a taste of this vibrant city yesterday, now it's time to get under the skin with a guided city tour. Immerse yourself in the colonial history of Ecuador with a walk through the old center, then check out the likes of Independence Square, Bishops Palace, the Cathedral and the ornate La Compañía. Choco-holics get excited, we'll get a taste-bud tingling tasting experience before heading up a viewpoint to get alllllll the panos of this place. Hope you limbered up, it's time to do the splits across the northern and southern hemispheres at the Middle of the World Monument.

Disclaimer: only attempt if you're a gymnast, know your limits. Tonight, get the gang together and go hunting for the best seco de pollo in town.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Orientation tour of Quito
- + Chocolate tasting experience
- + Visit Equatorial Line Monument

DAY 3 | QUITO TO YUNGUILLA

Start your day right with a spot of morning yoga or coffee on the rooftop deck before breakfast. Today we're headed into the Yunguilla Cloud Forest for an education in sustainable living and conservation. You'll be welcomed by the community and introduced to the various projects they have developed – including the tree nursery, handicraft workshop and jam factory. Tuck into the local produce with lunch at the Tahuallullo lodge before exploring the community. Tonight, we'll spend the evening eating and learning from a local family, staying overnight in their home. Name a more wholesome experience.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Lunch
- + Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Yunguilla Community experience
- + Overnight stay with local Yunguilla family

DAY 4 | YUNGUILLA TO PAPALLACTA

Rise with the sun and opt in to lend a hand with milking the cows. We're all about teaching the life skills. After breakfast, strap on your Nikes and get ready to tackle El Chocal – a viewpoint with stunning photo-ops over the Ecuadorian Cloud Forest. See if you can spot a toucan while you're here (that's the bird, not the icy pole FYI). After lunch grab a souvenir jar of jam from the community store, load up the coach and get ready to roll on to Papallacta. Famous for its hot springs and natural surroundings, you've got the WHOLE afternoon here to soak in the thermal waters, take a walk through the breathtaking Andean landscape or go all-out boujee with a spa treatment.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Lunch



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Hike to El Chocal viewpoint
- + Visit the Papallacta hot springs

DAY 5 | PAPALLACTA TO MISAHUALLI

Gaze out the window and watch the landscape change as we descend from the high altitudes of the Andes into the lush AF Amazon rainforest. We'll down lunch at our jungle lodge accommodation situated on the banks of the Napo river before heading into the jungle with a local guide. Learn all about the different medicinal plants and keep your eyes peeled for tropical birds and wildlife – this is as close to becoming Tarzan as you're ever going to get. Back at the lodge, we'll tuck into dinner with the crew. Top tip: try the maito fish. When you eventually hit the sack, fall asleep to the sounds of water rapids, birds chirping and the distant cries of monkeys. It's better than you could have imagined.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Lunch
- + Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Guided hike through the jungle

DAY 6 | MISAHUALLI

Today, you've got OPTIONS! Get the adrenaline pumping on an optional full day rafting experience on the Jatun Yaku River OR embark on an included cultural experience that's one for the memory bank. If you're all about what's included, we'll take a canoe ride to the Tiya Yaku community where we'll learn about their way of life, customs and values. Check out how the community extracts gold from the river to sell, be taken to the ceremony centre for custom demonstrations and give the blowpipe a go, the traditional hunting tool used by the indigenous people. After lunch back at the lodge, we'll head across the river to Amazonico rescue centre. Tonight, regroup with the fam to share the day's highlights over dinner.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Lunch
- + Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Visit a local Kichwa community
- + Visit the Amazonico rescue centre



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- + Full-day rafting experience on the Jatun Yaku River

DAY 7 | MISAHUALLI TO BAÑOS

Before we leave the lodge behind, it's your chance to create a souvenir with the help of an expert artisan. They'll teach you how to make necklaces or bracelets with organic products that you can show off back at home (cos' you're #cultured now). Get your bearings once we reach Baños with an included city tour. Then the rest of the afternoon is yours to soak up all the lush forest vibes with a hike, soak the travel-aches away in the hot springs or take in the views of Tungurahua volcano with a cocktail (or two) at the rooftop bar. Also our accommodation is home to the best pizza garden in town, just sayin'.



MEALS:

+ Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

+ Craft-making experience

+ Orientation tour of Baños

DAY 8 | BAÑOS

Heads up: today is yours to do whatever the f*ck you want. Into adrenalin-pumping activities? This is the place for it. Want to get back to nature? Take your pick of hikes or mountain biking routes. Keen to capture THE pic for your Insta? Take a swing off the edge of the world at Casa del Árbol. Or just chill out back at the hostel. It's your day, your way.



MEALS:

+ Breakfast

DAY 9 | BAÑOS TO QUITO (VIA COTOPAXI NATIONAL PARK)

Thought you were all viewed-out? Think again! Our drive from Baños toward Quito delivers some of the most spectacular views of the Andes. Glue that snoz to the window and enjoy. Before we reach Quito we've got a pit stop at Cotopaxi National Park – home to the second highest mountain in Ecuador and an active volcano. Take a hike around the Laguna Limpuipungo, learn about the páramo vegetation and admire the snow-capped peak of Cotopaxi. We'll roll into Quito tonight just in time to check out the farra (nightlife) and cheers to an incredible nine days on mainland Ecuador. Next: Galápagos.



MEALS:

+ Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

+ Visit the Cotopaxi National Park

DAY 10 | QUITO TO GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

You've seen David Attenborough's feature series, heard alllll about the funky and freaky animals and now it's time to experience the Enchanted Islands for yourself. Trust us, moments like these don't come around too often. We'll board our included flight to Baltra Island before ferrying over the Itabaca Canal to Santa Cruz. The second largest island of the Archipelago, Santa Cruz is a mixing bowl of plant zones and the perfect place to kick-start your Galápagos adventure. Later, we'll head to the Charles Darwin Station to check out the natural history collections and get educated in all things conservation.



MEALS:

+ Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

+ Airport transfers

+ Flight from Quito to Galápagos Islands

+ Visit the Charles Darwin Station

DAY 11 | GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

What better way to explore this place than on a full day boat excursion? On the way, you'll visit the uniquely beautiful Santa Fe island before tucking into lunch on board. Get pumped for the best game of I-Spy ever! Think: frigate birds, sea lions, green sea turtles and spotted eagles. Then when you thought it couldn't get any better, we'll strap on a snorkel and explore the world below the surface where giant marine iguanas rule. Return to the hotel with a full head, heart and SD card – incredible doesn't even cut it.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Lunch



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Full day boat excursion

DAY 12 | GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

From the glittering coast to the lush highlands, we'll get exploring the unique landscape of inland Santa Cruz today. Get a chance to check out the mind boggling Twin Craters – formed when the ceiling of a huge magma chamber collapsed from erosion. Then, we'll visit a lava tunnel and learn all about the fascinating volcanic geography of these unique islands. And what would a trip to Galápagos be without spotting a giant tortoise? Get your chance before we settle in for lunch. Round up the day's adventuring with a visit to the Santa Cruz brewery and get tasting some of the handmade brews mixed with seasonal ingredients. Salud!



MEALS:

- + Breakfast
- + Lunch



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Visit the highlands of Santa Cruz
- + Tasting experience at the first brewery on Santa Cruz

DAY 13 | GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Time to take the lead, today you're free to do whatever you want. Our tip: head to Tortuga Bay for a beach that looks like it's been ripped from the cover of National Geographic. Want more emerald green, crystal clear water? Take a water taxi to Las Grietas – a volcanic formation perfect for a swim or snorkel. If you're all about those organised activities, we've got you covered too. Jump aboard an incredible kayak tour through the Itabaca Channel. Think: blue footed boobies (not those type of boobies), sea lions, pelicans and sharks. It's your last full day here so you'd better make the most of it.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- + Itabaca Channel kayak tour

DAY 14 | GALAPAGOS ISLANDS TO GUAYAQUIL

Try not to cry into your cereal, we're out of here after breakfast. Spend the travel time to swap numbers with your trip mates and plan the next awesome adventure (obviously). Feeling like a different person? We get it, this trip is pretty lifechanging.



MEALS:

- + Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- + Airport transfer from hotel to Baltra airport
- + Flight from Galápagos to Guayaquil

TIPPING

NO TIP NECESSARY

Your Topdeck Trip Leaders and Drivers never expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. We also know how much tipping can cost you. So go ahead – spoil yourself with the money you save traveling with us (just don't forget Mum's souvenir).

TOPDECK TRAVEL APP

Our app is available to download before you travel. With a range of cool features including a currency converter, budget planner, check-in tool and group chat, it'll help you plan your trip like a pro. Think of it as your very own Topdeck Trip Leader in the palm of your hand.

TRIP GROUP CHAT

Connect with your fellow Topdeckers before you depart and begin your magical friendship in the flash of a winking face emoji.

ITINERARY VIEWER

Get the lowdown on where you'll be going and what activities you'll be doing on each day of your trip with this handy little tool.

CHECK-IN

Plug in all your vital deets and we'll keep them safe for when you really need them. Making your life easier, one swipe at a time.

BUDGET TRACKER

Keep an eye on your holiday spending, leaving you with more FUN-ds to play with. Think: elaborate Spanish feasts (not questionable supermarket sandwiches).

MAPS

Navigate your way to meeting points and lesser-known local gems using pins dropped by your Trip Leader, seek out your own bucket list sites and take to the streets like a pro.

Once the trip is over, you'll need the app to give us feedback about your trip experience. We love to hear what you thought about your trip, as it helps to give us an idea of the things we're doing well and the things we could be doing better.

PLEASE NOTE: The Topdeck Travel App should only be downloaded once you have booked your trip. You will not be able to log in unless you have a Topdeck booking reference number.

[GET IT FOR IPHONE](#)

[GET IT FOR ANDROID](#)



PASSENGER SAFETY

NIGHTS OUT

One of the best parts of travelling is experiencing the nightlife and entertainment each city has to offer. However, amidst the fun and excitement, it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety as well. Before you hit the road with us, be sure to familiarise yourself with the following safety information.

When you're on a night out, remember to avoid walking alone, particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation details so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. It's also a good idea to get your Topdeck trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking, and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

RESPECTING FELLOW PASSENGERS

Here at Topdeck, we're all about inclusivity. We want to make sure that everyone has a great time on our trips, and that everyone feels like they're part of one happy Topdeck family.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong – that's just not what families do. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow passengers. The golden rules? Always remember to respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation and treat others how you'd wish to be treated yourself. Easy!

DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Passengers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana, even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

REMEMBER – if you are found in possession of drugs, not only could you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if drugs are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you wouldn't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up again.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- + Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- + Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!
- + Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink, you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- + Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home, too – so they're sure to know of some tried-and-tested ways to beat the blues
- + Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (trust us).

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome holiday AND have a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- + Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your hotel towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- + Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- + Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets and book tours and activities run by local guides
- + Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- + Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

OTHER INFORMATION

INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

World Nomads provides comprehensive travel insurance for people from over 140 countries. For more information, visit www.topdeck.travel/travel-insurance.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

PLEASE NOTE: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it! (As long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is.)

- + 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes
- + 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- + 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- + 2 pairs of jeans/trousers
- + 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- + 4 shirts/T-shirts
- + 2 sweaters/jumpers
- + Smart casual evening wear
- + 1 rainproof jacket
- + 1 warm jacket
- + Underwear and socks
- + Swimwear
- + Towel
- + Toiletries
- + Hat and sunscreen
- + Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- + Insect repellent
- + Conversion plug
- + Reusable water bottle
- + Snow gear



THAT'S IT!