

TREN CRUCERO

The Essence Of Ecuador

Journey from coast to clouds aboard the award-winning Tren Crucero, South America's leading luxury train. Pulled along by lovingly restored antique locomotives, its convoy of plush carriages carry just 50 privileged passengers through places of spectacular natural beauty. It's not just all about Ecuador's landscapes however; Tren Ecuador - who operate this marvellous train - are also highly committed to preserving the country's rich cultural wealth.

Strategically operating cafes at railway stations, the company provides valuable employment to local cooks plus a stage to showcase regional cuisine. Its 14 "Artisans' Squares" encourage musicians and artists to hone age-old indigenous crafts, while tour itineraries incorporate personalities such as the Andes' last ice trader helping to revitalise old-fashioned trades in danger of dying out. It is this very ethos - to uphold both the material and human heritage associated with the nation's railroads - that makes Tren Ecuador so special.

For those looking for a deeper cultural experience, Tren Crucero Gold class offers accommodation in signature buildings that allow a unique journey through the history of Ecuador. From Quito's colonial, UNESCO World Heritage main square to historical haciendas, these properties have been selected for their singular character, attention to detail and their excellence in service.

So come discover the many facets of Ecuador on the Tren Crucero, enjoying genuine Ecuadorian hospitality first-hand by staying at traditional haciendas filled with character and visiting communities who make their living on the lowland plains or up in the snow-capped Andes. Travel between Guayaquil and Quito from \$2238 per person twin share. This route takes in a series of impossibly steep switchbacks through a dramatic area known as "The Devil's Nose". You'll also steam along the breathtaking Avenue of Volcanoes, home to Cotopaxi - the world's highest active volcano at a lofty 5,897m.

To find out more about including a Tren Crucero journey into your Ecuador journey, please contact our specialists on 1300 363 302.





CUENCA: HAT HEAVEN

Cuenca is Ecuador's third largest city and widely regarded as one of the most European cities in South America, thanks to its beautifully preserved 16th and 17th century Spanish colonial streetscapes. Aside from its evocative medieval ambience, Cuenca is noteworthy as the birthplace of the Panama hat. This attractive, almost brimless hat is said to have earned its name from the many workers who chose this style of functional yet fashionable headwear during the construction of the Panama Canal, and who unwittingly gave the Panama hat its name - much to the chagrin of Ecuadorians.

Throughout the cobblestone streets and squares of downtown Cuenca, you'll find hundreds of examples of this very wearable piece of traditional handicraft for sale. Graded by the government in order to maintain control over standards of craftsmanship, the finest

Panama hats sell for tens of thousands of dollars. Woven from the fibrous leaves of toquilla, a palm-like tropical plant found in Ecuador's coastal regions, a typical Panama hat is white in colour, lightweight and breathable - in other words, ideal for warm climates. Such is the skill required to create a high quality version, the Panama hat was added to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists in 2012.

A 4D/3N journey from the country's picturesque capital Quito to Cuenca, which includes a ride aboard an historic train along the notorious "Devil's Nose" mountain pass, starts from \$1488 per person twin share. This tour also includes riverside Banos - gateway to the Amazon rainforest, the ruined Inca citadel of Ingapirca and a visit to a Panama hat factory.



THE ENCHANTED ARCHIPELAGO

In the Lap of Luxury

The Galapagos comprises of 20 islands and over a 100 smaller islets lying roughly 1,000km west of Ecuador. Discovered in the early 16th century, this volcanic archipelago continues to enthrall visitors today with its quirky, inimitable wildlife who are completely without fear of man. With so many islands - each so different from the other - your toughest decision will be selecting the right itinerary and ship.

Haughan Cruises has one of the Galapagos' newest fleets, with each of their three sleek catamarans the very epitome of floating luxury. Twin-hulled for maximum stability and fitted with premium facilities such as hot tubs, Haughan's vessels all carry quality equipment - that guests can use free of charge - such as snorkels, wetsuits and kayaks as well as well-trained naturalist guides who will gladly point out or help identify exotic flora and fauna you come across throughout your voyage.

Their itineraries range from four to eight days in duration, taking in a variety of sights. Amongst the islands you may alight on include expansive Isabela, which boasts the highest number of giant tortoises as well as many active volcanoes and gaping craters. On Santa Cruz, you'll find lava tubes, flamingo lakes and the preeminent Charles Darwin Research Station, where endangered Galapagos tortoises and rare land iguanas are bred. The longest programs may even make it to far-flung Espanola, where you'll have to step over sea lions who favour its soft sand beaches.

Have one of our South America experts incorporate a Haughan cruise into your Ecuadorian holiday by calling 1300 363 302.



DELFIN

Amazon Rainforest Discovery



Drift deep into the Peruvian Amazon, through an immense flooded forest unrivalled in its biodiversity. You might be miles from modern civilisation, yet on any Delfin vessel, you'll have unsurpassable luxury at your fingertips. Launched in 2006 by a company steadfastly committed to responsible tourism, Delfin cruises travel through the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, Peru's largest protected area and a sprawling mosaic of rivers and jungle abuzz with life.



The Delfin fleet comprises of three splendid riverboats - the Delfin I, II and III - all tri-level and equipped with world-class facilities. Delfin I is the most exclusive, accommodating just 12 guests. Delfin II hosts 30 while Delfin III carries up to 43 people. On all vessels, you can count on the highest standards of service, delicious Peruvian gourmet cuisine and a wide range of included activities designed to unveil the wonders of the Amazon rainforest.



A typical day starts early, with skiffs taking you ashore to follow nature trails through virgin rainforest. English-speaking guides will point out birds, frogs, reptiles and primates that reside in this primeval wilderness. Getting wet is integral to the Amazon experience, with chances to swim in sheltered lagoons inhabited by curious river dolphins. You may even have the opportunity to kayak or paddleboard along peaceful creeks full of fish. Past sundown, excursions reveal an intense symphony of sounds and inky skies full of stars.

To plan your holiday to Peru, call our South America specialists today.