

Hiking the Highlands

Independent Trekking Trips in Scotland and Ecuador



The West Highland Way

Scotland, June 2022

“Everyman’s Everest”

The route follows:

- Ancient Roman roads
- British army roads (esp. vs Jacobite rebels)
- Sheep drovers’ routes
- Hiking paths

Scotland is:

- Friendly
- Safe
- Prosperous
- Scenic
- Uncrowded

Towns & Villages are 6-12 miles apart



Landscapes along Loch Lomond



Ruins in the Forest





Lodging— Inns and small hotels



Hostels (Not just for youth!)





Lodging-- Glamping



Landscapes in the Highlands



Crofters' cottage ruins



Eating in Scotland— Pubs and B&Bs



Eating in Scotland-- Picnics



Eating— “Self-catering”



Food in Scotland



Rannoch Moor



Weather



Baggage transport





Andes Excursions

Ecuador, February 2024



Quilotoa Crater Lake

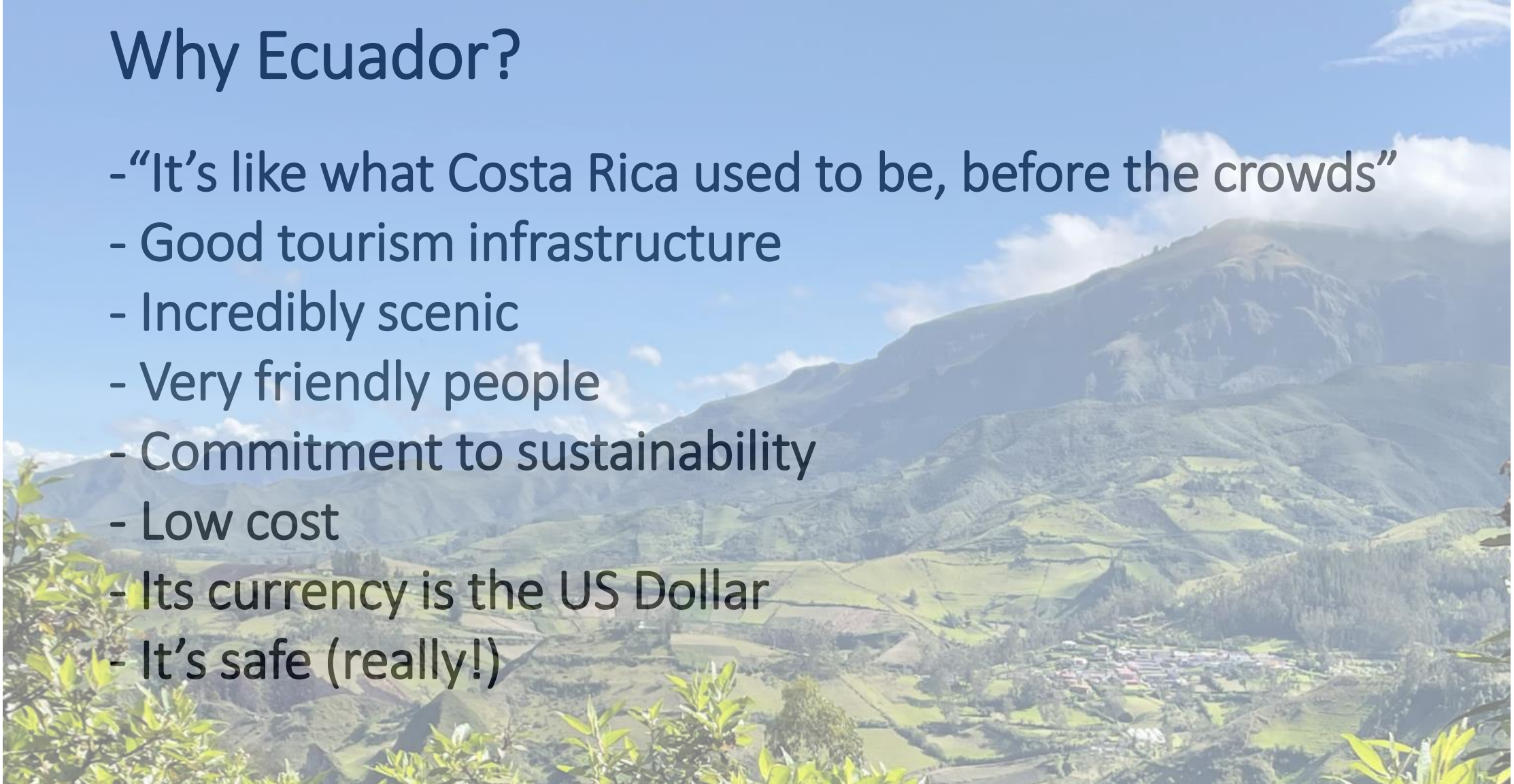


Cotopaxi National Park



Why Ecuador?

- “It’s like what Costa Rica used to be, before the crowds”
- Good tourism infrastructure
- Incredibly scenic
- Very friendly people
- Commitment to sustainability
- Low cost
- Its currency is the US Dollar
- It’s safe (really!)



Your Travel Destination Has Suffered a Disaster. Should You Still Go?

We often write off a country or region in the wake of a government upheaval or natural disaster—like the earthquake in Turkey or recent protests in Peru. Turns out that may be the best time to go. (Outside magazine 05/2023)

<https://www.outsideonline.com/adventure-travel/advice/natural-disasters-to-travel-or-not/>

Things to consider:

Benefits of tourism to residents of your destination:

- Economic impact on local economy
- Stabilizing impact on society

Benefits to tourists:

- Fewer crowds
- Lower prices and/or upgrades
- Closer encounters with locals
- Deeper, nuanced understanding

Other: Will your presence be a burden?
Travel insurance
Revising your itinerary

Do your research, and take info with a grain of salt:

- Ask “real people” who are in country.
- News reports are sensational
- Check travel.state.gov
- Be specific about places and threats.

According to the US State Department, which countries are:

Level 1- Exercise Normal Precautions

Level 2- Exercise Increased Caution

Level 3- Reconsider Travel

Argentina

Germany

Jamaica

Kazakhstan

Indonesia

Egypt

Zambia

Peru

Uganda

Poland

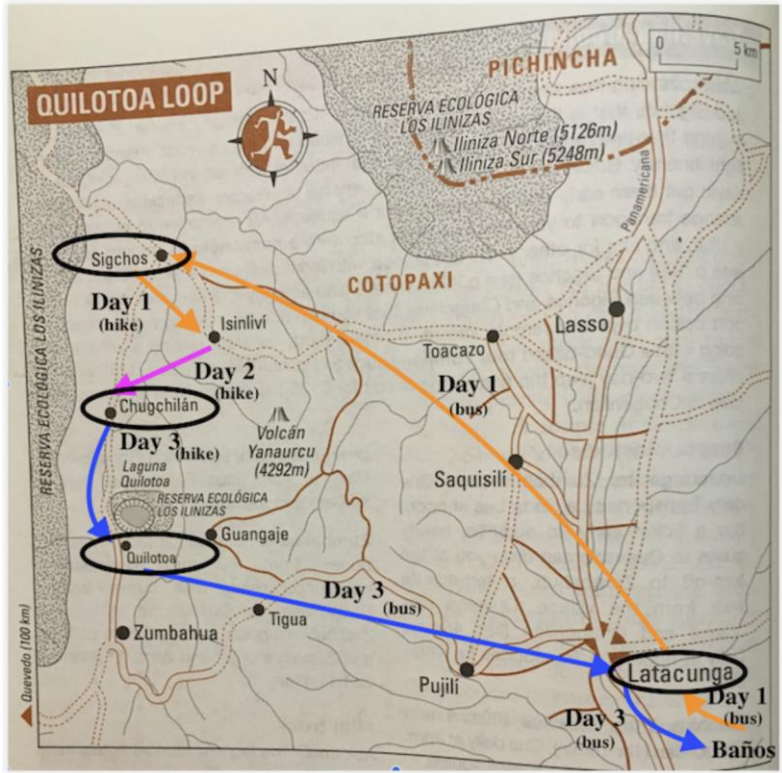
Great Britain

Trinidad & Tobago

Level 1- Normal Precautions	Argentina	Kazakhstan	Zambia	Poland
Level 2- Increased Caution	Germany	Indonesia	Peru	Great Britain
Level 3- Reconsider travel	Jamaica	Egypt	Uganda	Trinidad&Tobago

Trekking to Quilotoa









Lodging- Private rooms in hostels and small hotels



Common Areas in Hostels



Ecuadorans were extremely friendly and very grateful that we were there



Quilotoa Crater Lake



Circumnavigation Trail

Elevation 12,893 feet



Food- Hostel Breakfasts

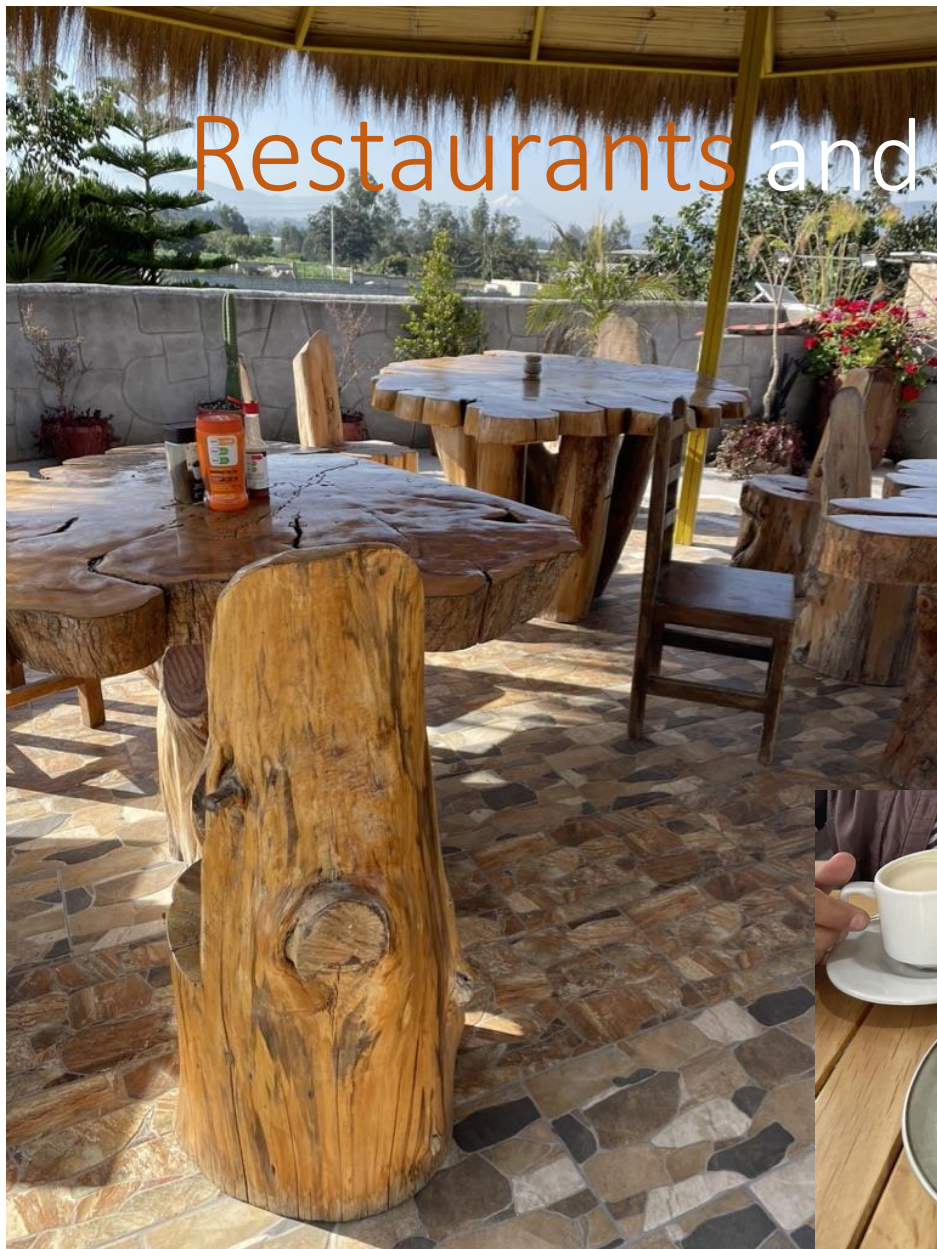


Food- Hostel Box Lunches

HOSTAL TAITA CRISTOBAL OFFERS	
• Box Lunch	\$ 3.50
(Sandwich, apple, water, banana, cookie or chips)	
• Sandwiches	\$ 1.00
(Tomato, onion, cheese and ham)	
• Coffee	\$ 1.00
• Coffee with milk	\$ 1.50
• Chocolate with milk	\$ 1.50
• Free tea	
In the morning Tea and coffee included in breakfast	

PLEASE, PAY WHEN ORDER	
SNACKS	
	\$
* French Fries	1
(with egg)	1,50
* Sausage	1,50
(with egg)	2
* Cheese or mortadella sandwich	1
* Hot dog or Hamburguer	2
DRINKS	
* COFFEE or HOT CHOCOLATE	1
* TEA	0,5
* BEER	2,00
* WINE GLASS	4
(bottle)	15
* Fruit juice	2,00
* Water Bottle (big/small)	12/075
LUNCH-BOX	
sandwich	
Yoghurt	
Cereals	
- Apple	
- Popcorn	
- Chocolate	
	3,50\$

Restaurants and Cafes



Cotopaxi



Secret Garden Hostel



Dormitory room



Family-style meals



and new friends



Glass bottles => Walls



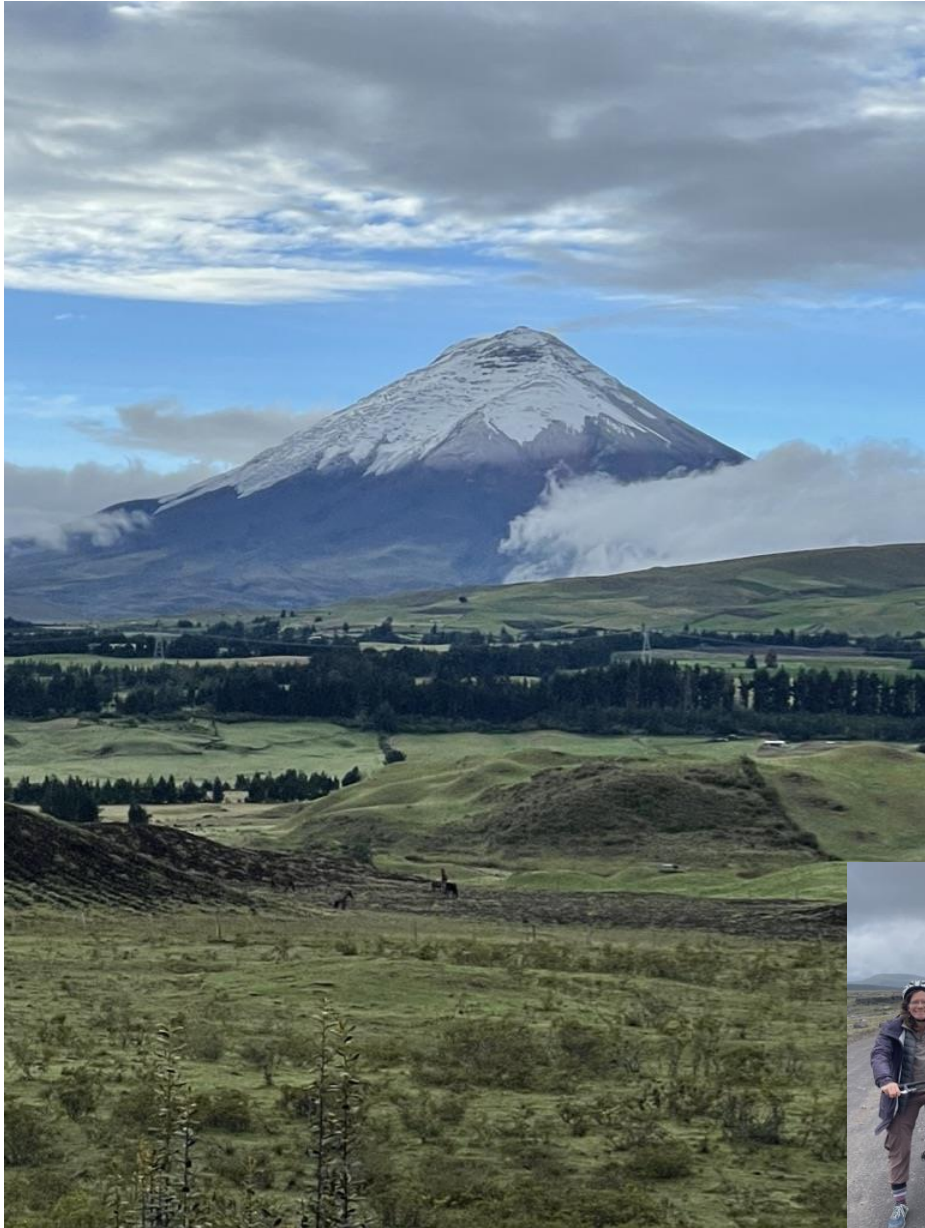
Guided Hiking Excursions



The resident llamas love banana peels



Cotopaxi Hiking, Biking and...



Horseback Riding





Taking the Bus



To CVG



In Ecuador



Bus Vendors

Packing: Clothes

Quick-dry fabrics, mix and match, layers

Rain coat, down sweater, warm and sun hats

Trail runners and lightweight water shoes

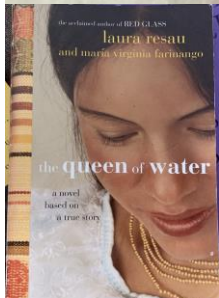
A scarf can add warmth and/or dressiness



Purse things

Money belt, “cash stash”, wallet, pocket cash and “decoy wallet”

Knitting, crossword puzzles, headphones, chargers, sunglasses, sunscreen, hand-sanitizer



Toiletries and other essentials

“Just in case--” Covid tests, diarrhea meds, mini-first-aid kit, spare glasses
Notes, headlamp, mini-lantern/power bank
Water bottle and water filter (life straw)
Toiletry basics, vitamins, wet wipes, towel bit



Is Independent Travel right for you?

- Do you enjoy challenges and learning new skills?
- Do you enjoy researching, managing and planning trips?
- Do you like more control over your food, lodging, activities, schedule, etc?
- How flexible are you?
- How wide is your comfort level, and/or are you willing to stretch it?
- Do you travel for self-development?
- Do you travel for immersion into a different world?
- Are you comfortable interacting with many different people?
- Is it important to you to stretch your travel dollars?
- Do you want more of your travel dollars to go local people rather than corporations?

BUDGET

West Highland Way, Scotland. 10 days in June 2022

\$ 380 Taxes on 2 round-trip flights CVG - Edinburgh (+120,000 United MileagePlus points)

\$1000 Lodging— inns and hostels for 10 days

\$1000 Restaurant meals for 10 days Not included: -Groceries for most breakfasts and lunches

\$ 85 Baggage transfer fee -Several days in cities before and after

\$ 35 Train from Edinburgh to Glasgow

\$2500 Total for 2 travelers for 10 days

\$1250 per person

\$125 per person per day

BUDGET

Andes Excursions, Ecuador. 15 days in February 2024

- \$ 200 Taxes on 2 round-trip flights CVG-Quito (+100,000 American Airlines points)
- \$ 730 Lodging— hotels and hostels. 15 nights. Includes many meals
- \$ 150 Restaurant meals for 10 days
- \$ 240 Transportation— taxis, shuttles, buses
- \$ 240 Excursions— zip-lining, horseback riding, hiking to glacier, chocolate farm tour

\$1560 Total for 2 travelers for 15 days

\$ 780 per person

\$ 52 per person per day

Typical costs in Ecuador:

\$40 small hotel room for 2 people, with breakfast and dinner

\$2-3 bus transportation anywhere in the country

\$20/hr Taxi rides

Scotland- West Highland Way

AA macsadventure.com

MACS ADVENTURE

11 Days & 10 Nights 4.8 ★★★★★

Read 1461 reviews

ACTIVITY LEVEL: [Progress indicator]

ACCOMMODATIONS LEVEL: [Progress indicator]

CARBON SCORING: [Progress indicator]

START / FINISH: Milngavie / Fort William

DISTANCE: 155 km / 96 miles

ACTIVITY: Inn to Inn Walking

TOUR TYPE: Classic Routes

AVAILABILITY: March-October

From \$1,855.00

\$185/person/day
plus airfare

Independent Travel vs Packaged Tours Costs

Ecuador Trips with Road Scholar

roadscholar.org

Multi-Sport

Galápagos Islands, Ecuador

Survival of the Fittest: Hiking, Biking & Water Sports on the Galápagos Islands

Learn the ever-evolving story of the Galápagos Islands as you join local experts to hike, bike, snorkel and swim your way through one of the most unique ecosystems in the world.

Activity Level: [Progress indicator]

Program No. 21577RJ

Length	Rating (5)	Starts at
10 days	★★★★★	\$4,499

Birding

Ecuador

Birding in the Ecuadorian Andes

Go off the beaten path to explore the pristine environments of the Ecuadorian Andes, where you'll join experts to spot a wealth of rare birds, including the stunning Cock-of-the-Rock!

Activity Level: [Progress indicator]

Program No. 21607RJ

Length	Rating (4.88)	Starts at
11 days	★★★★★	\$3,449

\$450/person/day
plus airfare

\$315/person/day
plus airfare

Is a Trekking Trip right for you?

- Do you enjoy physical challenges?
- Do you have the time and commitment to do some training?
- Do you enjoy eating extra calories?
- How wide is your comfort level, and/or are you willing to stretch it?
- Are you mentally and materially prepared for adverse weather?
- Do you travel for experiences other than checking items off lists?
- Do you travel for immersion into a different world?
- Do you value depth over breadth in your travels?
- Are you comfortable with your own company (and your companion's)?

Resources I Use to Plan My Travels

Google "Independent travel in"

booking.com (check reviews)

google reviews

Travel company websites are helpful to research destinations, seasons, etc

-macsadventures.com

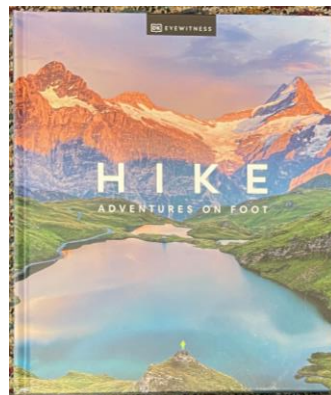
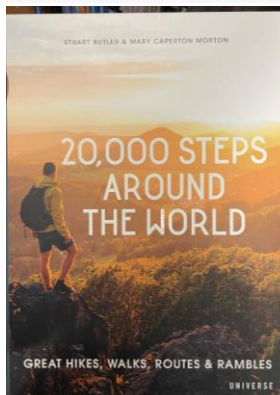
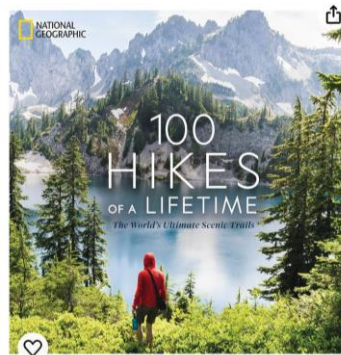
-roadscholar.com

-oattravel.com (overseas adventure travel)

-sierraclub.com

-your favorite tour company

Joseph-Beth Travel Section



This is a digital nomad's site that I used a lot in planning my trip to Ecuador, and they have info on many other destinations!

My email address:

jodisharris@gmail.com

Feel free to contact me with questions!

explorersaway.com

