



## Train to the Clouds Guayaquil to Quito

On this fascinating 4-day rail tour, experience one of the most dramatic changes in vegetation, climate and geography while traveling between the coast and mountains of Ecuador. This journey of discovery through the Ecuadorian Andes provides a fascinating insight into the local cultures as well as their cuisine. You'll climb the Andes, ascending 6500 ft on a scenic route to the mountain town of Alausi. Next, tackle the famous train of the Devil's Nose and experience first-hand how this magnificent feat of engineering allowed the train to conquer the Andes. On the way to Latacunga, a group of "devils" will board the train for a spirited performance. Before crossing the foothills of Mt. Cotopaxi, you will explore Cotopaxi National Park; a massive nature reserve, teeming with vegetation and colorful birds. Your adventure ends when you reach the beautiful city of Quito, named the world's first cultural world heritage by UNESCO more than 40 years ago. And, throughout this fascinating journey, you'll be accompanied by expert guides.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

• 1 Night Alausi

• 1 Night Riobamba  
• 1 Night Latacunga

• 1 Night Quito

### INCLUSIONS

• Private Roundtrip Transfers  
• First Class Rail Guayaquil to Quito

• English Speaking Guide

• All Meals (except dinner on the final evening)



#### ARRIVE ALAUSI:

Transfer from your Guayaquil hotel (pre-night required) to the Duran railway station where a carefully restored steam locomotive will be waiting to transport us on a journey through time. With the roar of its engine and its steam whistle, it will take us into the past, to the time when these fabulous machines first began to travel along the coastal tracks, completely changing the reality and history of the country. The first stop will be at Yaguachi, the first station built on the railway system, where we will say goodbye to our steam locomotive to make a way for a diesel-electric, and we will be able to observe the changeover of these impressive machines from outside the maneuver area. Our journey now continues through extensive plantations of sugarcane, banana, coffee, pineapple and a countless number of tropical products, on our way to the Naranjito area. A bus will then take us climbing into the Andes on a scenic route that will ascend more than 2,000 meters (approximately 6,500 ft.) in just 4 hours. On the journey, we will see abrupt changes in climate, vegetation and geography as we climb to the picturesque mountain town of Alausi, high in the Andes. Our first day ends in the comfort of our hotel in this small town nestled in a spectacular spot among the area's jagged mountain peaks. An evening walk through the streets of Alausi will give us a feeling of traveling back several decades in time.

*(Lunch, Dinner & Accommodations, Alausi)*



#### ALAUSI TO RIOBAMBA:

The second day begins with an inspiring trip aboard a train which dates from the early twentieth century, this time descending through the fearsome Nariz del Diablo, or Devil's Nose pass; an intricate switch-back track that allows the train to descend 511 meters (1,6756 ft.) in just 12 kilometers of railway. Considered an engineering marvel in its day, this train ride is still spectacular. In Alausi will have time to take pictures and visit the local market, where the quiet city that the night before was lost in the mists of time, has now becomes the scene of one of the most colorful markets in the area, serving more than a dozen surrounding communities. Lunch is served on board after a short bus ride. We now move on towards the town of Colta where the "Black Monster", an impressive and carefully refurbished Baldwin steam locomotive, is ready to take us on the final leg of our journey. Fields of quinoa, potatoes, onions, corn and other products provided by these fertile soils, dot the picturesque landscape as we head towards the capital city of Chimborazo province, Riobamba. On the way we will pass by the majestic Mt. Chimborazo, Ecuador's highest mountain, at 20,549 ft. In Riobamba, we will find an enchanting historic city where Ecuador's first constitution was written. Here we will walk through cobbled streets and squares where every step tells the history of the country.

*(All Meals & Accommodations, Riobamba)*



#### RIOBAMBA TO LATACUNGA:

In the morning, we travel to La Moya, where the inhabitants of the community will give us a glimpse of what life is like in the Andes. We will be able to meet and talk to the local people and see one of the best examples of what is known as a "Minga", a cooperative form of work that is organized by the community and is part of an indigenous tradition passed down through the generations. The tour continues on to the Urbina railway station. Baltazar Ushca, the last ice cutter on Mt. Chimborazo, will tell us his story and explain the motives behind his work, which continues to this day despite the now universal use of refrigerators. Our train will then pass through a valley close to the spectacular snow-capped Mt. Cotopaxi, but on the way, a group of 'devils' will board the train when the Diablada de Pillaro ('Pillaro Devils') is celebrated on the train itself. This is a fascinating, extremely colorful parade, whose music and joyful spirit give us a glimpse of the soul of the Andean communities and their understanding of the world. The final stop of the day will be the Latacunga railway station from where we will transfer to our hotel.

*(All Meals & Accommodations, Latacunga)*

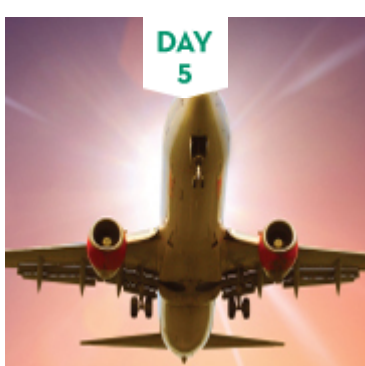


#### LATACUNGA TO QUITO:

Have your cameras ready as today we travel to Cotopaxi National Park. We'll start with a moderate walk around the Limpiopungo Lagoon. If conditions are right, the lake can afford an incredible view of Mt. Cotopaxi. You'll also be able to view a large variety of plants and several species of birds that have adapted to the lofty altitude. After returning to the train, the tour will then cross the foothills of Mt. Cotopaxi on the way to our next stop: a typical Andean hacienda where we will be part of its daily activities. On our arrival, we will be welcomed by Andean cowboys, or "Chagras", who will show us their skills as riders and teach us about their culture and traditions. Our final day ends at the Eloy Alfaro station in Quito. Afterwards you'll have a transfer to your selected hotel\*.

*\*Dinner will be on your own this evening and your hotel can offer several suggestions.*

*(Breakfast, Lunch & Accommodations, Quito)*



#### DEPART QUITO:

After breakfast, you'll have a transfer to the airport, returning home or continuing on to your next Avanti Destination!

*(Breakfast, Quito)*