

# Abercrombie & Kent



## ECUADOR HONEYMOON

**Duration:** 8 Days/7 Nights

Explore the hidden secret of Ecuador, Quito. South America's most overlooked luxury destination, a beautifully preserved colonial capital. The entire city has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and wandering around Quito can transport you back 500 years.

### Programme Overview

Cotacachi

### Highlights

Welcome with a bottle of sparkling wine and fresh strawberries dipped in sweet, organic Ecuadorian chocolate at Cotacachi

Explore Cuicocha, a stunning dark water Crater Lake

Learn about ancient weaving techniques at Peguche

Visit Otavalo market and Plaza del Poncho, the colorful and authentic produce & textile market

Cruise on the Amazon River aboard M/V Anakonda

Walk into the Ecuadorian Amazon Rainforest, explore the mysteries and watch how life emerges in the dark

A private canoe trip to experience the reserve, you will see Pink River Dolphins, common squirrel monkeys, Pañacocha (Piranha Lake, in Quechua), Piranha, Water Monkey Fish (Arawana) and White Caiman.

Enjoy an Amazon style BBQ on a camp site

Experience a cultural & ethnic encounter with the locals

### A&K Advantage

Meet Mr. José Luis Pichamba's in the village of Peguche and learn about local musical instruments

Private arrival and departure airport transfers

The services of an A&K Representative

*\* On arrival in each country, you are welcomed by your A&K Representative who conducts a briefing on your time in the country. An A&K Representative is always at hand to provide unparalleled 24/7 support, be it local travel tips or reconfirming arrangement details, to providing recommendations for restaurants and shopping. Should you ever need help or advice, dial your A&K Representative's mobile phone for prompt and courteous service at any time.*

## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 1

#### **ARRIVE QUITO—COTACACHI—At leisure**

Upon arrival you will be welcomed by an A&K Representative and transferred by a private vehicle to La Mirage Garden Hotel & Spa, where you will be assisted with check-in. Known as the Ciudad de Paz (City of Peace), Cotacachi is a quiet little pueblo with incredible vistas.

En-route to the hotel you will cross dramatic mountain landscapes dotted with tiny villages, and white churches to Cotacachi. La Mirage is perched on a hillside, mixed with the native flavor of the Andes and has beautiful view of the mountains and gardens. This former hacienda is a paradise of plant life filled with a thousand fragrances from its bougainvillea, hibiscus, rose and orchids that you will also find in freshly cut bouquets beside your bed each morning.

Commemorate your honeymoon with a bottle of sparkling wine and fresh strawberries dipped in sweet, organic Ecuadorian chocolate.

Evening is at leisure.

A private romantic candlelit dinner will be served at your private outdoor terrace.

**Overnight:** La Mirage Garden Hotel & Spa

**Meal:** D

### Day 2

#### **COTACACHI—Visit to Cuicocha and Peguche village**

After breakfast, you will visit Cuicocha, a stunning dark water Crater Lake located in the Western Cordillera of the. "Cuicocha" is a Kichwa word meaning "Guinea Pig Lake", a name given due to the shape of the large islands in the centre of the lagoon. Created 3,100 years ago by a massive eruption, the lake is three kilometres long and occupies a stunning setting with deep azure waters. You have the option of hiking along the ridge surrounding the lake; a trek which can last anywhere from 30 minutes to six hours.

After your lunch, stop by at Mr. José Luis Pichamba's home in the village of Peguche. His family has been long known for musical tradition. Your hosts will show you the process of crafting traditional instruments as well as demonstrate how to play them. You may even try to play them yourself!

Peguche is also home to many of the area's textile weavers. A visit to one of their workshops will provide you the opportunity to see the ancient weaving techniques used to produce famous textiles.

**Overnight:** La Mirage Garden Hotel & Spa

**Meal:** B

### Day 3

#### **COTACACHI—Otavalo & Plaza del Poncho**

After a delicious breakfast you will visit the famous Otavalo market, the colorful and authentic produce market. You will have the opportunity to see many unique fruits and vegetables of Ecuador. Saturday is the special day when the artisans display their goods and the town comes alive in all different colours and hues of their local produce and provides the best bargains.

Plaza del Poncho, your next stop is where the textile market is held. This is a real explosion of colors and smells. It is also interesting to see the vendors; they are dressed in a traditional way that shows the evolution and maintain of their identity.

After your lunch, Cusin is a very interesting Hacienda. Visit this beautifully decorated with gardens hosting a lot of birds and local plants.

Evening is at leisure.

**Overnight:** La Mirage Garden Hotel & Spa

**Meal:** B

#### **Day 4**

##### **QUITO–Napo River to board M/V ANAKONDA**

Depart from Quito for a spectacular private charter flight over the eastern Andes mountain range to Coca. You will then be privately transferred to the Napo river port for a private boat ride to the port in the Napo River where you'll board the M/V Anakonda, the only luxury ship in the Ecuadorian Amazon Rainforest. En-route, spot from Anakonda's sundeck birds like herons, kingfishers, and many others. The sounds of civilization are soon forgotten here – only the water and the myriad sounds of the surrounding rainforest.

After dinner, you will have an opportunity to go for a walk into the forest to explore the mysteries of this distinctive environment and watch how life emerges in the dark. In 1541, the very first Europeans set out from Quito to explore the dense jungles east of this ancient Incan capital in search of gold and cinnamon. Not the jungle nor the natives ever revealed where the precious metal of "El Dorado" was to be found, as they floated for 800 miles down the Napo to come upon what they thought to be the Atlantic. But it wasn't the Atlantic - yet. It was the Great Amazon River, fed by over a thousand tributaries, emptying one third of the planet's fresh water into the sea.

This is the habitat of wildlife that is sure to be watching you - or vice versa.

**Overnight:** M/V Anakonda

**Meal:** B, L, D

#### **Day 5**

##### **M/V ANAKONDA–Black Water Lagoon**

Breakfast will be on board.

Navigation continues downstream to the Pañayacu River delta; take a private canoe trip up the river to experience this fascinating reserve. You will see Pink River Dolphins, common squirrel monkeys and much more. Pañacocha (Piranha Lake, in Quechua) is an ecosystem flooded by white waters. The rivers and lakes here are the perfect habitat for the infamous Piranha, as well as the Water Monkey Fish (Arawana) and White Caiman.

After a refreshing swim (for the courageous), you will enjoy a delicious Amazon-style BBQ meal and refreshing beverages at a nearby camping site.

In the afternoon, you will head out on exploration trails, and return onboard for dinner.

**Overnight:** M/V Anakonda

**Meal:** B, L, D

#### **Day 6**

##### **M/V ANAKONDA–Kury Muyu & Parrot clay lick**

Breakfast served on board.

Today you will experience a cultural & ethnic encounter with the locals. Spend some time at one of the forest communities to explore their everyday lives, and you may shop for local handicrafts and souvenirs.

Later you reach Parrot Clay licks, a great location to on look one of the most exciting wildlife spectacles in Amazonia.

After lunch, explore one of the local jungle trails as you head to an exclusive water museum, where you learn about the many creatures that inhabit this environment. After the visit, conditions permitting, paddle your way downstream towards Napo and enjoy more opportunities to observe wildlife.

**Overnight:** M/V Anakonda

**Meal:** B, L, D

#### **Day 7**

##### **DEPART QUITO**

Make an early departure by a private canoe to Coca for your private charter flight to Quito for your onward flight.

**Meal:** B

## Possible Extension:

### 5 Days GALÁPAGOS Grand Odyssey Luxury Cruise

#### Day 1

##### QUITO– GALÁPAGOS

Upon arrival at Baltra Airport, you will pass through an airport inspection point to ensure that no foreign plants or animals are introduced to the islands. You will be met by a A&K Representative and privately transferred to the M/V Grand Odyssey, where you will check in to your cabin.

Visit Cerro Dragon, located at the north shore (dry landing) of Santa Cruz. The name stems from the fact that this was one of the few sites on Santa Cruz Island where a large population of land iguanas were found when researchers came in 1975. The walk includes a brackish lagoon frequented by lagoon birds, stilts, pintail ducks, sandpipers, sanderlings and occasionally flamingos. Further inland, the trail offers a stunning view of the bay and the western islands of the archipelago. This area is a natural nesting site for land iguanas, constantly monitored and aided by the Charles Darwin Research Station.

You will have the opportunity to swim or snorkel post the walk.

**Overnight:** M/V Grand Odyssey

**Meal:** B, L, D

#### Day 2

##### GALÁPAGOS

After breakfast on board, you will visit the Black Turtle Cove, which is one of the most beautiful marine sites in the Galapagos. It is a complex maze of tranquil salt-water inlets surrounded by three different species of mangrove. Its waters nurse sea turtles, rays, and sharks as well as some sea birds, which is only accessible by panga or kayak.

Post lunch, your destination will be Sombrero Chino Islet, the tiny island of Sombrero Chino (wet landing) gets its name from its unique appearance which is similar to that of a Chinese hat. Lying just off the southeastern tip of Santiago Island, this islet took shape fairly recently and makes for a beautiful spot for scenic photographs. You may romance along this islet's trail, beginning at the crescent-shaped white sandy beach offering picturesque views. The cove offers excellent swimming and snorkeling with sea lions and tropical fish in the tranquil blue waters. Kayaking is also an option.

**Overnight:** M/V Grand Odyssey

**Meal:** B, L, D

#### Day 3

##### GALÁPAGOS

Today morning we stop by El Barranco, Genovesa Island. Genovesa (dry landing) is the northernmost island that is allowed to be visited by naturalist (non-diving) cruises.

This island is extremely remote and home to millions of birds belonging to different species including red footed boobies, frigate birds, swallow-tailed gulls, and even endemic owls. El Barranco, also known as Prince Phillip's Steps, is a steep path (90 feet) with stairs carved into rock which leads to a plateau full of bird life amongst a Palo Santo forest. Palo Santo, paradise for a bird watcher.

In the afternoon the Darwin Bay's soft, coralline white sand (wet landing) is only the beginning of a spectacular excursion. An easy stroll from the beach takes you into lush mangroves where red footed boobies nest. As you walk hand in hand you will watch thousands of birds in these mangroves. Snorkeling along the cliffs is a must here as sea lions, sharks, colourful reef fish, rays, and tortoises are common. You may also go out for a romantic paddle in a sea kayak.

**Overnight:** M/V Grand Odyssey

**Meal:** B, L, D

#### Day 4

## **GALÁPAGOS**

Breakfast on board, after which you land at Bartolomé Island and discover a fascinating moonscape (dry landing) dotted with volcanic formations such as lava tubes and spatter, tuff, and cinder cones — as you hike up a short, yet somewhat steep trail.

Along the way, you will also encounter pioneer plants, lava cactus, Scalesia plants, marine iguana and lava lizards. The sight from the top is the true reward: iconic 'Pinnacle Rock' next to golden beaches and turquoise waters. Returning through dunes and mangroves, we reach the north shore. Beach time is a great chance to see and perhaps snorkel with Galapagos penguins, sea turtles, sea lions, rays, and white-tipped reef sharks among a great variety of colorful schools of fish. This may be one of your best snorkeling experiences, as the water here is generally clear, lacks large surf, and is full of marine life.

Next stop post lunch is Sullivan Bay, a perfect place to see and feel the volcanic origin of Galápagos. You'll arrive (wet landing) at a white coral sand beach and walk over lava that flowed here less than 100 years ago. Formed during an 1897 eruption, the lava was so hot that it essentially evaporated anything in its path, leaving only an imprint of what had been there before. It's a stark, surreal, and strangely beautiful environment. One observer aboard a sailing vessel reported that the ship approached the lava flow so closely that the pine tar used to seal the hull of the ship began to soften, and the captain had to hurry the ship away from the bay. Snorkeling may be possible at the end of the visit.

**Overnight:** M/V Grand Odyssey

**Meal:** B, L, D

## **Day 5**

### **GALÁPAGOS–QUITO**

After you enjoy your breakfast, the last visit will be to the Highlands. The trail to the highlands leaves from Bellavista and passes through the agricultural zone, near the National Park boundary, the Miconia zone, and finally the fern and sedge zone. The highlands are one of the best places in the islands to observe giant tortoises in their natural habitat among some highland birds.

The tortoises are easy to spot as they lumber around eating grass and leaves and wallowing in the small pools that are common in the area. They have few natural enemies; humans being their principal threat. There are several lava tunnels nearby, a great place to spot the barn owl. There is also a small lagoon covered in red algae where gallinules and Galápagos pintails can be found.

After your visit to the highlands it will be time to depart to the airport in a private vehicle for your return flight to Quito.

Private transfer to your hotel and afternoon is at leisure to enjoy Quito's colonial night.

**Overnight:** Plaza Grande Hotel

**Meal:** B, L

## **Day 6**

### **DEPART QUITO**

Transfer to the airport in a private vehicle for your flight ahead.

**Meal:** B