

MAY I INTRODUCE YOU TO

This portfolio is a new and special concept that encompasses the most authentic and traditional experiences in Ecuador.

Taking the most important traditions from several destination in Ecuador, we have aimed to create a tapestry of experiences that reflect the true essence of our region. Accompanied by bona fide experts, visitors in Ecuador will live a new kind of tourism, one where the value is set in the genuine contact with the most intimate aspects of each culture.

May I Introduce you to experiences connect what makes us unique, finding the common ground that can showcase Ecuador as a whole to the rest of the world.



Andean Weaving

Ecuador / Otavalo

The lakes district in the Northern Andes is a beautiful area to explore, not only for its scenic beauty and interconnected valleys, but also for the worldwide famous indigenous market of Otavalo and its fascinating community of local entrepreneurs. Here, under the watchful gaze of the majestic Mount Imbabura, visitors will learn about the textile traditions in the Andes by the hand of Don Miguel Andrago, while they find the quiet harmony which is typical of this primarily Quechua speaking region.

Character: **Miguel Andrago**

Miguel is Kichwa and speaks his native language. He has been weaving since he was 7 years- old and has proudly inherited his ancestors' techniques and passion. The relationship with the Incas accounts for the workshop's name. 'Tawantinsuyo' is the term for the Empire that, before the arrival of the Spanish, stretched from the South of what is now Colombia to the middle of Chile. "I wanted to make the connection," he tells proudly, "it's important to us Kichwa."

2D/1N

Otavalo Cultural Trails.



Andean Cooking class

Ecuador / Otavalo

José María was the chef at one of Ecuador's most well-known haciendas, and now offers cooking classes in their family kitchen (optional, extra). Guests can learn to make traditional dishes with local ingredients, then enjoy the fruits of their labor around the dining table. Carmita offers classes in embroidery, an art that the region is renowned for.



Indigenous pride on canvas

Ecuador / Quilotoa

You will walk along the rim of the magnificent crater of the Quilotoa volcano, today a serene lake, that reflects the intense blue sky. This dreamy landscape inspires local painter Julio Toaquiza to immortalize scenes of life in the Andes, framed by volcanoes, orchards and majestic flights of brightly colored condors. This is the perfect prelude to visiting the artist in person. You will hear Julio's stories, which he will share in his workshop, surrounded by oil paintings, canvasses, brushes and the warm welcoming by his family.

Host: Julio Toaquiza

Artist descendant of the Panzaleos people, a community that was subjugated by the Incas and then the Spanish conquerors, after an initial resistance. Recently they revendicated their traditions, amongst them painting. When young, Toaquiza used to work as a musician and for fun he painted his instruments with the art learnt from his ancestors. One day, for necessity, he accepted to sell his drum to a stranger, who happened to be an art dealer from Quito. From then, his life changed and he dedicated himself to painting, as he had foreseen in a dream that he had as a boy.

5D/4N

As part of the "Highlights of the Andes" program



The Craftsman trail

Ecuador / Cuenca

Cuenca is the arts and culture epicenter of Ecuador, with beautiful buildings, cultural diversity and artisans that preserve traditions over generations. In its surroundings of stunning Andean landscapes are the towns of Gualaceo and Chordeleg, where you will meet four families devoted to different ancestral artisanship: textiles as the pre-hispanic ethnic Cañaris used to craft, beautiful silver jewelry, finely designed guitars by a family of luthiers and the hats of an authentic “chola cuencana”. You will also visit an orchid nursery with over 2,000 species and a colorful market.

Host

MARÍA SANCHEZ, PASSION FOR HATS: María Sánchez is a “chola cuencana”, she weaves hats with the Toquilla palm, including the “Panama hats”, a 200 year-long tradition.

SANTIAGO JIMÉNEZ Y ANA MARIA ULLOA, IKAT WEAVERS: Ikat is a Pre-columbian weaving technique by the Cañaris ethnic. Its complex fibers dyed in one package and its slightly blurry finishing has granted this family compliments by monarchs and presidents.

FLAVIO JARA, GOLDSMITH WITH PEDIGREE: From the second generation of a Cañari goldsmiths family, he works silver into delicate filigree, recognized nationally and internationally.

LA FAMILIA UYUGUARI: TOP-CLASS LUTHIERS: Five generations of high end luthiers, considered amongst the best in Ecuador.



*Full Day
Otavalo Cultural Trails.*

Terra - Quito's New Gastronomy

Ecuador / Quito

Our senses are delighted and our hunger is sated from the opening of Terra - Quito's newest gastronomic experience. The kitchen is helmed by **Chef Alvaro Reinoso** (El Celler de Can Roca, Nuna and Elements) and the food is nothing short of spectacular.

The Guests relished Chef Alvaro's unique and creative style of cooking. He takes Ecuador's simple, mainstream products and transforms them into stunning epicurean delights. He knows and trusts the ingredients and uses his special kitchen alchemy to create dishes that never fail to wow lucky diners.

We worked with Chef Alvaro to help Terra come to life, which naturally translates into insider access for Tropic clients. Your foodie guests will be able to enjoy exclusive experiences at one of Ecuador's top dining spots during their vacation.



Quito Cooking Experience

Ecuador / Quito

We are pleased to offer a different culinary experience in Quito for your food loving clients! We are excited to give your travelers the chance to hone their cooking skills and to dig a bit deeper into contemporary Ecuadorian cuisine.

Our new cooking class takes place inside of a colonial house with an open air courtyard at its center near Quito's Basilica del Voto Nacional. Guests will don aprons and roll up their sleeves to help the talented chef Edwin create some of his signature Franco-Ecuadorian dishes. Even seasoned cooks will pick up new techniques and experience a new side of Ecuador's cuisine. Following the class, travelers will sit down to enjoy the fruits of their labor.



Conservation routes in Galapagos

Ecuador / Galapagos

You will tour the magical archipelago of the Galapagos Islands, natural laboratory for its time-encapsulated flora and fauna, guided by Polo Navarro, guardian of this ecological paradise. Polo will share with you its vision, love and fascination of this world full of almost fantastic creatures. You will visit five islands in five days, enjoying activities such as snorkeling and kayaking, as well as observing incredible wildlife such as albatross, iguanas, sharks, sea lions and the famous gigantic Galapagos tortoises, which Polo cares for in his lodge Galapagos Magic, where you will sleep every night surrounded by the most exuberant nature.

Character: Polo Navarro

Previously owner of the famous Red Mangrove Inn, Polo moved up to the highlands of Santa Cruz Island to open Galapagos Magic. This place, full of simplicity and serenity, is a sanctuary of biodiversity, with Polo as guardian, where giant tortoises, wild horses and many types of birds can move around in complete safety, away from the crowds in Puerto Ayora. After almost 50 years on the Galapagos Islands, Polo is a passionate defender and promoter of this magical corner on Earth and is eager to share with you his vision, love and fascination for this place and the fantastic creatures that inhabit in it.

5D/4N

Island Hopping in Galapagos.



Pacari Chocolate Experience (3 hours)

Quito

We open our its doors for a new tourism experience in Quito. The ‘Pacari Chocolate Tasting’, where you will learn all about the process of making great chocolate. You will learn why Ecuador is the best country in the world to grow fine cocoa, and the story of cocoa in world history. The tour, appropriate for visitors of all ages, showcases the process of creating the best chocolate in the world.

Activities will include a guided tour explaining the history of cocoa in Ecuador, followed by a tasting of award-winning Pacari chocolate. The presentation also focuses on the agricultural aspects of cocoa production and the communities that work with Pacari to bring their product to market.

As part of the tour you will be able participate in a live digital game experience that visualizes the chocolate process from harvest to fabrication. You will then be able to produce truffles with real organic ingredients, without sugar and milk.

NOT INCLUDED:

* Alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks

* Personal Expenses

* Tips

* Transportation to the Chocolate shop

Clay sculpting with a Quiteña artist (3 hours)

Quito

Clay Sculpting With A Quitena Artist

Clay Sculpting With an artist from Quito

A relaxed visit to Sara Palacio’s house-workshop is a very pleasant way to learn about the intricacies of sculpture in clay, and you will have an opportunity to view the artist’s two workshops:

The first is ‘muddy’, as Sara calls it, where she produces sculptures every day with the clay she brings from different regions of Ecuador (clay can be different!!). Under Sara’s supervision you will be able to handle the clay and, following the production process step by step, make a small piece using the string or plate techniques.

The second is the clean workshop, where Sara uses techniques such as painting, printmaking, drawing and, when she has time to spare, writing her poetry.

The visit includes a tour of the extensive garden where you will see several sculptures from her personal collection. Sara will explain how her home and work form part of an artistic endeavor: to preserve and restore Quito's cultural and historic identity, something she has dedicated herself to for over 30 years. During your visit you will have the chance to participate in the game of the Spheres and identify aspects of your personality through the choices you make. You will see why the game provides a gateway to understanding the different characters of the city, where these people lived and why they are so interesting. Afterwards, as part of your artistic day, you will be challenged to find 'your' sphere in Quito's colonial center.

Includes: refreshments, guided visit by Sara Palacios, workshop & techniques for producing a clay sculpture.



NOT INCLUDED:

* Alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks

Personal Expenses

Tips Transportation to / from the Gallery

Photography Half Day Trip (4 hours)

Quito

Photography Day Trip

Once you have shared a little about your interests and experience with us, we will be able to prepare your individual day with our highly skilled photographer.

If your skills are basic, the class will provide the tools you need to make your photographs stand out. You will be provided with the tools for handling a camera in the MANUAL function: the technical aspects of exposure (ISO sensitivity control, aperture, shutter speed) and concepts of composition: proportion and selective framing etc.

If your skills are advanced, the class will focus on photographs using a tripod, together with technically accurate, advanced techniques of framing and composition, as well as High Dynamic Range (HDR) concepts. If you wish to take an evening class, long exposure night photography techniques are available. We have cameras for rent if needed.

Monday to Sunday Morning: from 06:00 to 09:00 or 8:00 to 11:00. (You can choose any of these schedules. They are subject to availability)

Courses can be arranged in the afternoon or evening depending on the availability of the photographer.

Includes: Transportation, English speaking photographer, guided excursion, and theoretical & practical experiences

NOT INCLUDED:

- * Alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks
- Personal Expenses
- Tips

Chocolate & Art Experience

Quito

Exploring the finest Chocolate

For the ultimate chocolate experience, we are offering guests the chance to take an exclusive journey through 5,000 years of culture and awaken their senses with the finest chocolate & art that Ecuador has to offer. We have partnered with To'ak Chocolate and Fundación Guayasamín to offer the 'Chocolate & Art Experience,' a one-of-a-kind journey in Quito that celebrates the rich history, art and chocolate of Ecuador. To'ak uses the oldest and rarest cacao variety on earth to make extremely limited editions of single-origin Ecuadorian dark chocolate. Visitors then get to taste the extraordinary results while guided by a chocolate specialist in a top-level experience akin to a fine wine or aged whiskey tasting.

The tasting is held in a private wine cellar in one of the most unique and fascinating art museums in the world. Some of the 20th century's most notable people such as Fidel Castro, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and the King of Spain were entertained in the wine cellar. Guests are guided through a comprehensive tasting of raw and roasted cacao beans, as well as four different editions of To'ak Chocolate while learning about different cacao varieties, terroir, fermentation methods, barrel-aging and how they influence the expression of chocolate.

Included: excursion

VIP visit to Pre-Columbian Art Museum Casa del Alabado with a curator

Quito

Experience pre-Columbian art and culture in a different way, in one of the most exclusive and prestigious museums in Quito. Guided by the museum curator, an archaeologist with years of experience.

You will find pre-Columbian art and history like never before. An intimate look at the museums behind the scenes. Upon entering the warehouses, to admire treasures that are not normally seen to the public, you will connect with the experience of how each exhibition is conceptualized and everything that remains to be discovered.

This visit is made from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

*** Only available on Wednesdays.*

Includes: Attraction

*DOES NOT INCLUDE: * Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages Personal expenses Transportation from / to the museum*

