



5 DAYS / 4 NIGHTS

DAY 01: The journey starts with a 30 minute flight from Quito to Manta or Portoviejo. One of our qualified staff members will transfer you by car to Machalilla National Park (about 3 hour drive). On the road, there will be a stop in order to visit the home of the legendary Panama hat, Montecristi. For approximately one hour, you will have the opportunity to enjoy the air and history of this notable coastal town with residents engaged in the weaving of these extraordinary straw hats. We continue our trip to Machalilla National Park through roads that will offer splendid views of coastal Manabí. At your arrival to Mantaraya Lodge, a superb lunch will be ready for you. In the afternoon, our proficient naturalist leader will present to you a range of activities from which you can choose. You can either go to the beach, venture into a fishing village, or hike through an exceptional moist forest to experience your first encounter with the local flora and fauna. After dinner, there will be an introductory talk about Machalilla National Park and the activities for the next day.

DAY 02: It is time to discover the Machalilla National Park wonders. Located in the heart of the park, the village of Agua Blanca offers you the opportunity to observe the archeological remains of the once powerful Salango Chiefdom, which was part of the Manteño culture. With the help of various organizations, the community of Agua Blanca with more than 400 inhabitants is engaged in several projects to rescue the archeological ruins and improve the administration of the tourism activities. There is a great number of activities in the area for your pleasure.

- You can choose to visit the Agua Blanca archeological museum to learn from one of the native guides about pre-Columbian cultures, the local way of life and the natural history of the area.
- From the museum, we can take you hiking with the company of a knowledgeable native tour guide around the archeological site through a path that offers the possibility to encounter different species of flora and fauna that are part of the deciduous tropical dry forest. You may choose to spend some time at the sulfurous water spring and take a therapy bath. The hiking distance and time depends on you.
- For the adventurers, there is an opportunity to explore the San Sebastian fog forest riding a horse. Some trails designed by the local people will take you through deciduous and semi-deciduous dry forest to arrive to the fog forest at an elevation of around 800 m. This tour offers you the opportunity to observe tropical birds, plants, insects, reptiles and occasionally mammals at different altitudinal levels. This is also an excellent tour for bird-lovers after organizing minor adjustments !!*
- In addition to the walking tours, we can arrange a bike ride through the Buena Vista valley dirt road (about 5 Km). Departure from the entrance road to Agua Blanca, ending at the archeological museum. This trip gives you the opportunity to be in close contact with the deciduous tropical dry forest enjoying nature and people's way of living. The tougher option is to take the Julcuy road departing from Buena Vista valley and ride for about 40 Km to end at the Jipijapa-Guayaquil highway where our truck will be waiting to get us back to the hotel.*

* These are optional excursions and activities not included in the cost of the program; please contact your booking agent to program this activity in advance. The biking adventure is an intense and demanding activity that requires more than a basic level of fitness. Please note that if you are particularly sensitive to heat, this may not be the trip for you.



The visit to Agua Blanca village is an all-day activity. For this reason, a box lunch and plenty of water will be provided during the tour. On the ride back to the hotel, we can make an optional stop by the fishing town of Puerto Lopez and stroll through the “Malecón” or main street along the beach to have a view of the town’s corners. This visit is entirely up to your discretion. After dinner, our excursion leader will be giving a briefing about the activities that will take place the next day, and if you are interested, a lecture regarding a special topic about Machalilla National Park .

DAY 03: This day we swap the mainland activities at Machalilla to explore the wonders of the offshore Isla de la Plata. The Silver Island is an outstanding wildlife sanctuary for seabirds and other marine life. Our sea adventure begins at Puerto Lopez' tranquil harbor where we will go on board the comfortable Mantaraya boat. The navigation to the island may last about one and half hours. There are mainly 3 activities in this full day tour. One is hiking along the pre-determined trails on the island with our naturalist guide to learn more about the natural, geological and cultural history of La Plata. You can decide to take either the long or short trail. There is also plenty of time to go snorkeling and observe an interesting marine ecosystem around Drake’s bay. If you just want to swim and relax on the beach, you will have the opportunity to do so. A box lunch and water will be offered to you during this trip. In the afternoon, our boat will navigate back to Puerto Lopez where our bus will get us back to Mantaraya Lodge. After dinner, our excursion leader will be giving a briefing about the activities for the next day.

- If you are interested in scuba diving, please contact your booking agent in advance, so we can make the necessary arrangements and ensure your satisfaction. Isla de la Plata has excellent locations for divers where you may see multicolored fishes, rocky coral reefs, rays, and occasionally sharks.*

* This is an optional activity that is not included in the cost of the program. Please contact your travel agent to book this activity in advance. You will need to demonstrate your diving experience by presenting your PADI license.

DAY 04: The rocky cliffs, bays, and wide beaches of southern Manabí are surely a luring attraction to anyone. That is why today’s tour is going to be at the unspoiled white sand beach of Los Frailes; which is one of the 3 major protected seashores of Machalilla National Park where the nesting of at least two species of sea turtles (carey and green turtles) takes place each year between January and May. The 3 gorgeous beaches at los Frailes are separated by tropical coastal scrub vegetation and eroded headlands. The choices to get here are to walk through a natural trail that starts near the entrance road and ends at the main beach. This path goes along the seashore offering an exceptional coastline view and access to the three beaches. The hike lasts approximately 3 hours and offers you the chance to observe different species of flora and fauna that inhabit the coastal scrub. Another way to get to the main beach is by car or bike through a non paved road. Once in Los Frailes, you can just relax and sunbathe, walk through the natural path, swim in the warm equatorial waters, or maybe snorkel and enjoy the vivid marine creatures you may encounter. Lunch will be served at the hotel and after a deserving rest, our excursion leader will bring you to the small fishing village of Salango. This small town, located south of Puerto Lopez, has an interesting museum with samples collected at different sites, inside and outside the Machalilla National Park. In addition, the museum exhibits in chronological order the archeological ceramic vestiges of cultures that inhabited the coast of Ecuador more than 5,000 years ago. People at Salango are involved in a project called the marine parcel, which is a shallow area located between the Salango hill and the Salango island where you can snorkel, scuba dive, and practice selective fishing. After dinner, our excursion leader will be giving a briefing about the activities that will take place the next day.

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DAY 05: This last day offers you the chance to visit the tropical moist forest, also known as fog forest. On one trip with our naturalist guide, you may see over 20 different birds species, learn about the local flora, and understand why this ecosystem is different from the others you have already been. For approximately a couple of hours you can come into contact with this marvelous paradise and experience the sensation of being in the real jungle. Lunch will be ready for you at the lodge. In the afternoon, you will have some time to pack and get ready to leave Machalilla National Park. The trip to Manta or Portoviejo airports will take approximately 2 hours. On your arrival to the airport, our staff will take care of your ticket and boarding pass to return to Quito.

Please note: While it is our intention to adhere to the route described above, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or appropriate to make alterations. You will be notified of any changes on a daily basis.

Our staff will always be offering information about the area, the weather conditions, navigation, native cultures, plants, and probabilities to encounter wildlife through lectures, briefings, recaps and videos.

Diving, fishing, horse-back riding, and biking are offered at an additional cost.

