

CHARMING CUENCA EXPERIENCE

3-Day Tour in the Andes



Wander through cobblestone streets to discover a city brimming with captivating architecture, vibrant markets, and welcoming locals eager to share their rich cultural heritage. Cuenca's renowned craftsmanship and the importance of guilds in the region, such as artisans and carpenters are evident in every corner, showcasing the region's dedication to preserving traditional skills while embracing contemporary influences.

Join us on this immersive journey to experience the heart and soul of Cuenca, where history, culture, and modernity come together to create an unforgettable adventure.

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Day 1: Welcome to Cuenca (B/L/-)

Upon your early morning arrival in Cuenca, you will be transported to your hotel to prepare for this adventure, which begins with a delightful visit to a centenary monastery for breakfast. Following this, you will embark on a discovery tour of the beautifully maintained historic district, where colonial architecture harmoniously blends with modern structures and natural surroundings.

With its rich cultural and historical background, the city offers numerous sites such as the San Sebastian neighborhood, the Museum of Modern Art, and the main square, Parque Calderón, surrounded by cathedrals and other important buildings.

Stroll along the picturesque Barranco area and the evergreen Tomebamba River trails, noting the unique bridge structures. Follow this with a fascinating tour of a Panama hat workshop and museum—a fantastic opportunity to acquire this unique Ecuadorian souvenir.



In the afternoon, you will visit the Mirador de Turi, a wonderful viewpoint where the city's terracotta roofs and blue domes can be admired against the imposing backdrop of the mountains. Back in the historic district, you will be enchanted by a family-owned jewelry workshop. Here, you will learn about the importance of silver to the region's development and enjoy a hands-on experience making your very own silver ring. At the end of the tour, you will be transported back to your hotel. Overnight.

Day 2: History, Traditions and Craftsmanship (B/L/-)

Located about 2 hours north of the city, you will find Ecuador's largest Incan ruins complex: Ingapirca. This fortress was built atop a Cañari civilization adoration site, revealing the intriguing blend of both cultures before Spanish colonization. This fascinating site features a system of aqueducts where water flowed to the ritual baths and irrigated sacred crops, showcasing wonderful agricultural knowledge through a solar and moon "calendar."



The adventure continues in Gualaceo, a delightful destination for lovers of colorful art and craftsmanship. You will enjoy a visit to a traditional market, walking through stalls of various produce and foods, including the traditional "hornado." Gualaceo is also known for its shoe-making industry, giving you time to browse local shops and do some shopping.



In the afternoon, Chordeleg, a true silversmith town, welcomes you with its famous filigree earrings that hang from the light poles around town. Filigree is an art that uses fine wires to form delicate pieces of jewelry. This quaint town is a hidden gem full of small, locally-owned silver shops for you to explore and shop.

Before heading back to Cuenca, you will visit an artisanal weaving workshop, where the renowned "Macanas," colorful pashminas, are made using an ancient and complex traditional technique known as IKAT. Return to your hotel in Cuenca. Overnight.

Note: This tour is available Wednesday to Sunday.





Day 3: Pottery and Moorlands (B/L/-)

Enjoy an immersive pottery experience with a practical tour and class at the workshop of Ivan Encalada in his family-owned pottery shop. This hands-on experience will turn you into an artist while you gain important insights into different pottery techniques and the significance of this craft.

Next, you will head west of Cuenca for a fantastic visit to Cajas National Park, which features numerous exploration trails at different elevations. Here, you can admire its captivating moorlands, hundreds of lakes, and the Polylepis tree forest. Capture stunning photographs of the breathtaking vistas of the mountains shaping the western Andes of Ecuador, offering the perfect conclusion to this adventure.

Return to Cuenca for an airport drop-off. End of services.

Note: It is advisable to book your flight back to Quito or Guayaquil after 6:00 pm.

INCLUDED

- Airport Pick-up and Drop-off
- Private Transportation
- 2 nights of hotel accommodation
- Bilingual Guide
- Meals as described in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L= Lunch). Meals include one soft drink per serving.
- Entrance Fees
- Workshops as described in the itinerary; materials included
- One simple silver ring per person

NOT INCLUDED

- Airfare tickets
- Dinner and meals not described in the itinerary
- Personal Expenses
- Extra soft beverages and alcoholic drinks
- Extra and/or non-scheduled visit/activity
- Tips

Notes:

The itinerary and order of visits are subject to change due to guests' interests, time constraints, physical endurance, weather, municipal regulations, safety, and/or unforeseen circumstances.