



**ANDANDO^o
TOURS**
Mainland Ecuador &
Galápagos Islands

2011

Quilotoa

The Emerald-Green crater.

We leave Quito south travelling alongside the length of the city out into the valley below. The Avenue of the Volcanoes opens up before us and we head south towards Cotopaxi, one of the highest active volcanoes in the world.

We cross the tracks of the old 'Ferrocarril', Ecuadorian Train network that ran 965km across ten provinces to the coast and is in the process of being restored.

On our way down the Avenue we stop in at the Hacienda La Alegría for a typical highland breakfast of humitas, fresh eggs fruit juices of mora and naranjilla and cow's milk from the dairy.

Before heading off again you can take a walk around this old working hacienda and enjoy the spectacular views of the interandean corridor and majestic snowy peaks.

From the Hacienda La Alegría we head south along the Avenue of Volcanoes, this stretch dominated by the magnificent peak of Cotopaxi and neighbouring Rumiñahui, Sinchologua and the Ilinizas.

On through the countryside, passing sheep and llamas grazing in the surrounding fields and farms, we visit the highland towns of Pujilí and La Victoria, renowned for their beautiful ceramics.



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We will stop here at a ceramics workshop to see how they work in clay and the techniques they use to paint final products. You will then have a chance to create your own ceramic. In Tigua we call in at the workshop of local artist, Julio Toaquiza, painting on sheep skin in the naïf style, colourful scenes of highland festivals and folkloric characters, typical for this region.

In Quilotoa crater, a nice, easy walk takes us down, some 200m, to the shore of the dazzling emerald-green Laguna Quilotoa. The lake was formed when, after several violent eruptions the crater filled with water creating a stunning, natural wonder.

On foot or horseback up to the top to enjoy a country picnic; hot soup, sandwiches and cake before our journey back up the Avenue of Volcanoes to Quito.

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