



5 DAYS / 4 NIGHTS PROGRAM

DAY 1:



The journey begins with a 30-minute flight from Quito to Manta. You will be met by one of our qualified staff members and transferred by car to Machalilla National Park (a 3 hour drive). On the road, we will stop to visit the legendary Panama hat makers of Montecristi, where you will learn about the fascinating history and art of this notable coast town weaving tradition.

We continue to Machalilla National Park through roads that will offer splendid views of coastal Manabí, one of Ecuador's largest and most spirited provinces. Upon your arrival at Mantaraya Lodge, a superb lunch will be waiting. In the afternoon, our naturalist leader will present to you a range of activities and options from which to choose. You can either sunbathe at the beach, venture into a fishing village, or hike through an exceptional humid forest to experience your first encounter with the area's vegetation and wildlife. After dinner, you may attend an introductory briefing on Machalilla National Park and the next day's activities.

DAY 2:



It is time to discover the wonders of Machalilla National Park. Located in the heart of the park, the village of Agua Blanca offers you the opportunity to admire the archeological remains of the one-time dominant Salango Chiefdom, which belonged to the Manteño civilizations. With the help of various organizations, the community of Agua Blanca (no larger than 400 inhabitants) has created several projects to rescue the archeological ruins and improve administration of their tourism activities.

There is a great number of activities in the area for you enjoy:

- You can choose to visit the Agua Blanca archeological museum to learn about pre-Columbian cultures, the local way of life and the natural history of the area.
- From the museum, we can also hike around the archeological site through a path that offers the possibility of encountering the nature and wildlife of this very particular deciduous forest. You may choose to visit and enjoy the water springs. The hiking distance and time of visit are at our guest's discretion.
- For more adventure-seeking guests, there is an opportunity to explore the San Sebastian Cloudforest on horseback. Trails designed by the locals will take you through deciduous and semi-deciduous forests into cloudforest at an elevation of around 800m. The tour offers the opportunity to observe tropical birds, plants, insects, reptiles and occasional mammals at different altitudinal levels. This is also an excellent



tour for bird lovers (please inquire so we can adjust the schedule*)

- In addition to the walking tours, we can arrange a bike ride through the Buena Vista Valley dirt road (about 5 Km), departing from the entrance road to Agua Blanca and arriving at the archeological museum. The ride gives you the opportunity to be in close contact with the deciduous tropical forest enjoying nature and people's way of living.
- The tougher option is to take the Julcuy road departing from the Buena Vista Valley for 40 Km ride that ends along the Jipijapa-Guayaquil highway, where our van will be waiting to transfer 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 these activities 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 optional stops at the fishing town of Puerto Lopez and stroll down its "Malecón," or main street along the beach, and enjoy town life. This visit is entirely up to you. After dinner, our excursion leader will give a briefing about the activities that will take place the next day, and if you are interested, a presentation regarding a special topic on Machalilla National Park.*

DAY 3:



We swap the mainland activities at Machalilla to explore the wonders at sea, as we head to Isla de la Plata. Isla de la Plata is an outstanding wildlife sanctuary for seabirds and other marine life. Our sea adventure begins at Puerto Lopez's harbor where we embark on Mantaraya's private yacht. Navigation to the island may last about one and half hours. There are several activities you can complete during this full day tour.

You can hike along trails on the island with our naturalist guide to learn more about the natural, geological and cultural history of Isla de 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 as well. A box lunch and water is offered during the excursion. In the afternoon, our boat will take us back to Puerto Lopez where our private van will be waiting to transfer us back to Mantaraya Lodge. After dinner, our excursion leader will offer a briefing on 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. Isla de la Plata has excellent locations for divers where you may see multicolored fish, 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 4:



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 pristine 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 (Hawksbill and Green Sea Turtle) 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 cuts through deciduous scrubland and reaches the seashore, offering an exceptional coastline view and access to the three beaches. The hike lasts approximately 3 hours and offers 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. Once in Los Frailes, you can just relax and sunbathe, walk the natural paths and trails, reach the viewpoint for a beguiling view of the endless Pacific Ocean, swim in these warm equatorial waters, or maybe snorkel and enjoy the lively marine world down under. Lunch will be served at the hotel. 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 archaeological museum with samples collected at different sites inside and out of Machalilla National Park. In addition, the museum exhibits in chronological order the archeological ceramic vestiges of cultures that inhabited coastal Ecuador over 5,000 years ago. The community at **Salango** is involved in a project called the marine parcel, which is a shallow area located between Salango Hill and Salango Islet where you can snorkel, scuba dive, and practice fishing. After dinner, our excursion leader will offer a briefing on the activities that will take place the next day.

** If you are interested in scuba diving, please contact your booking agent in advance, so we can make the necessary arrangements. Isla de la Plata has excellent locations for divers, offering encounters with a variety of multicolored fish, 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 5



This last day offers you the chance to visit the tropical forest, also known as cloudforest. On one trip, you may get a chance to see over 20 different bird species, learn about the local flora, and understand why this ecosystem is different from the others you have already visited. Venture into true tropical jungles along the Equator.



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 Airport takes approximately 2 hours by car. On your arrival to the airport, our staff will take care of your ticket and boarding pass for your 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.