

FAIR TRADE IMMERSION JOURNEY

Understanding Value Chains, Communities & Living Economies Across the Andes and Amazon

(13D / 12N)

*Brought to you by Maquita Impact-Based DMC
Where Travel Creates Equity*

THE EXPERIENCE

This Fair Trade Immersion Journey is designed for travelers who want to understand how fair trade takes shape in real territories, connecting production, community organization, local livelihoods and responsible commercialization across Ecuador.

Moving through the Andes and into the Amazon, the program follows a structured sequence of living value chains, including panela, textiles, infusions, lupine, quinoa, toquilla straw, cacao, Amazonian food systems and community-based tourism. Each visit reveals a different part of the same broader story: how communities organize production, preserve knowledge, strengthen local economies and connect their work with wider markets.

Rather than presenting isolated visits, the journey builds a continuous narrative from origin to market, showing how fair trade depends on relationships, quality, transparency, collective organization and territorial value. It is ideal for travelers, institutions and partners interested in responsible trade, social economy, community enterprise and the people behind Ecuador's products with history.

ITINERARY AT A GLANCE

Day 1: Arrival in Quito – Private airport transfer – Boutique-style accommodation.

Day 2: Quito – Middle of the World – Pacto panela project – Yunguilla community immersion – Accommodation in Yunguilla.

Day 3: Yunguilla – Otavalo – Peguche textile project – La Calera community tourism experience – Accommodation in La Calera.

Day 4: La Calera – Cayambe women-led infusion project – Hacienda-style lunch – Return to Quito – Accommodation in Quito.

Day 5: Quito Historic Center – Fundación Maquita visit – Institutional fair trade framework – Transfer to Tambillo – Accommodation in Tambillo.

Day 6: Tambillo – Chugchilán lupine production project – Quilotoa crater landscape – Accommodation in Quilotoa.

Day 7: Quilotoa – Community landscape experience – Transfer to Riobamba – Hacienda-style accommodation near Riobamba.

Day 8: Riobamba – Guamote quinoa project – Tolte community project – Cañar toquilla straw / Panama hat project – Transfer to Cuenca – Accommodation in Cuenca.

Day 9: Cuenca – Gualaceo Macana textile project – Domestic flight to Quito, not included – Transfer to Pifo – Accommodation in Pifo.

Day 10: Pifo – Amazon region – Community innovation project – Arrival at Shandia Lodge – Rainforest night walk – Accommodation in Shandia.

Day 11: Amazon immersion – Chocolate workshop – Chakra visit – Chicha preparation – Community and production practices – Accommodation in Shandia

Day 12: Amazon – Amupakin visit – Return to the Andes – Transfer to Pifo – Accommodation in Pifo.

Day 13: Pifo – Private airport transfer – Departure or optional Galápagos Islands Experience.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival in Quito

Upon arrival in Quito, reception at the airport and private transfer to the hotel provide a smooth start to the program. The day remains open, allowing time to adapt to the altitude and prepare for the journey ahead.

Quito serves as the entry point to the country, introducing the national context before moving into the territories where production systems, community organization and fair trade practices will be explored in detail. Overnight in Quito.

Accommodation: Boutique-style hotel in Quito

Meals: None

Day 2: Quito – Middle of the World – Pacto – Yunguilla

After breakfast, the journey begins with a visit to the Middle of the World, establishing a geographical reference for the program. This first stop situates travelers within Ecuador before moving into rural production environments.

The route then continues to Pacto, where a panela production project introduces the first value chain of the journey. Here, the process of transforming sugarcane into panela is observed step by step, making visible how raw materials are processed and how local production is organized.

This visit is not only about the product, but about understanding how small-scale systems operate, how labor is distributed and how value is generated at the local level. From Pacto, the journey continues to Yunguilla, where community-based tourism has been structured as an alternative economic activity.

After lunch, a guided visit to the community tourism center explains how the initiative is managed, how income is distributed and how sustainability is integrated into daily operations. The day closes with dinner and overnight within the community, marking the transition from observation into immersion.

Accommodation: Community tourism center in Yunguilla

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3: Yunguilla – Otavalo – La Calera

After breakfast, departure from Yunguilla begins the transition toward the northern Andes. Along the route, a stop in Peguche introduces a textile project, where weaving is presented as

both a cultural expression and an economic activity.

Here, travelers see how traditional knowledge is maintained while also supporting local livelihoods, connecting identity with production. The journey continues to La Calera, where the experience moves deeper into community-based organization.

Upon arrival, activities are structured to show how tourism, agriculture and local management coexist within the same system. This stage reinforces the idea that production is not isolated, but part of a broader network of community practices. Overnight in La Calera.

Accommodation: Community tourism center in La Calera / Cotacachi

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4: La Calera – Cayambe – Quito

After breakfast, the day begins within the community before continuing toward Cayambe. A visit to a women-led infusion project introduces another type of value chain, focused on small-scale production, collective organization and local market positioning.

Here, the emphasis is on how local initiatives are structured, how responsibilities are shared and how products are developed within local and regional economies.

Lunch is served at a hacienda-style restaurant, offering a transition between community environments and more traditional hospitality settings. The journey then returns to Quito, reconnecting the experience with the broader urban context. Overnight in Quito.

Accommodation: Boutique-style hotel in Quito

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 5: Quito – Fundación Maquita – Tambillo

After breakfast, the day begins with a short visit to Quito's historic center, providing cultural context before focusing on the program's core theme.

The visit to Fundación Maquita Cushunchic introduces the organizational structure that supports the different value chains explored throughout the journey. Here, travelers understand how production, commercialization and support networks are connected, linking field experiences with institutional processes.

This moment is key to understanding how fair trade operates beyond individual communities,

showing how systems are coordinated at a broader level. The journey then continues to Tambillo, where arrival at a hacienda-style lodge marks a transition back into a rural Andean setting. Overnight in Tambillo.

Accommodation: Hacienda-style hotel in Tambillo

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 6: Tambillo – Chugchilán – Quilotoa

After breakfast, the journey heads toward the Quilotoa region, where altitude and landscape conditions define local production systems.

A stop in Chugchilán introduces a lupine production project, locally known as chocho, where travelers learn how crops are adapted to high-altitude environments and how local food systems are sustained under these conditions.

This visit highlights the relationship between environment, agriculture and community resilience, showing how production is shaped by geography. The journey continues to Quilotoa, where lunch is served at a viewpoint overlooking the crater lake.

The afternoon is dedicated to light activities, allowing travelers to experience the environment while adapting to altitude. Overnight in Quilotoa.

Accommodation: Community-style hotel in Quilotoa

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7: Quilotoa – Riobamba

After breakfast, activities around the Quilotoa crater provide a direct experience of the volcanic landscape. The environment itself becomes part of the learning process, showing how communities live and organize within these conditions.

The journey then continues south toward Riobamba, with a stop for lunch along the route.

Upon arrival at a hacienda-style hotel, the afternoon remains open for rest, allowing travelers to process the previous days while maintaining the program's overall rhythm. Overnight near Riobamba.

Accommodation: Hacienda-style hotel near Riobamba

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8: Riobamba – Guamote – Tolte – Cañar – Cuenca

After breakfast, the journey continues toward Guamote, where a quinoa production project introduces another key value chain. Here, travelers observe how production is organized at the community level and how it connects to larger distribution systems.

The visit to Tolte provides further context on community organization, reinforcing how local initiatives are managed collectively. Lunch at the Nariz del Diablo viewpoint connects the day's experiences with the surrounding landscape.

The route then continues to Cañar, where Panama hat production, made from toquilla straw, is presented. This final stage of the day shows how traditional craftsmanship connects to international markets.

Arrival in Cuenca concludes a day that integrates multiple value chains into a single continuous narrative. Overnight in Cuenca.

Accommodation: Boutique hotel in Cuenca

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 9: Cuenca – Gualaceo – Pifo

After breakfast, the journey continues to Gualaceo, where the Macana textile project introduces a specific weaving technique linked to cultural identity and economic activity.

This visit reinforces the connection between tradition and market, showing how craftsmanship remains relevant within contemporary production systems.

After the visit, return to Cuenca for the transfer to the airport and flight to Quito, not included. Upon arrival, transfer to Pifo for overnight.

Accommodation: Hacienda-style lodge in Pifo

Meals: Breakfast

Day 10: Pifo – Amazon Region – Shandia Lodge

After breakfast, the journey transitions toward the Amazon region, introducing a new environmental and productive context.

A stop at a community project focused on edible mushroom production presents an example of innovation within local systems, showing how communities diversify their economic activities while adapting to available resources and market opportunities.

Arrival at Shandia Lodge marks the beginning of the Amazon stage, where tourism, conservation and community life are closely connected. A guided night walk introduces the rainforest ecosystem through direct observation. Overnight in Shandia.

Accommodation: Jungle lodge in Shandia / Tena

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11: Amazon Immersion – Production & Community Practices

After breakfast, the day is structured around key Amazonian production and cultural systems.

The chocolate workshop introduces cacao processing within the local context, while visits to the chakra and chicha preparation show how food systems are organized at the household and community level.

Each activity builds on the previous ones, allowing travelers to understand how production, culture and daily life are interconnected in the Amazon. Overnight in Shandia.

Accommodation: Jungle lodge in Shandia / Tena

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12: Amazon – Amupakin – Pifo

After breakfast, the journey begins its return toward the Andes, including a visit to Amupakin, where local initiatives related to territory, ancestral knowledge and community development are presented.

This final visit reinforces the connection between community organization and territorial management, closing the narrative built throughout the program.

The transition from rainforest to highlands marks the end of the immersion experience. Overnight in Pifo.

Accommodation: Hacienda-style lodge in Pifo

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 13: Departure or Extension to Galápagos Islands

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for departure, marking the end of the mainland journey.

For travelers wishing to extend their experience, this program can be seamlessly connected to Maquita DMC's dedicated Galápagos Islands Experience.

Accommodation: None

Meals: Breakfast

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Galápagos Islands Experience Cruise-Based or Island Hopping Extensions

The Galápagos Islands Experience allows travelers to extend their Fair Trade Immersion Journey through either cruise-based exploration or island hopping programs, depending on their profile, comfort expectations, timing and preferred travel style. Cruise-based journeys offer integrated expedition flow, onboard comfort and wider geographic reach, while island hopping experiences provide land-based flexibility, hotel comfort, local island atmosphere and modular daily exploration. Through selected local operators in the islands, Maquita DMC coordinates Galápagos extensions with clear logistics, responsible travel standards and a coherent service framework connecting mainland Ecuador with one of the world's most iconic natural destinations.

✓ PROGRAM INCLUDES

- National bilingual guide (English/Italiano/Deutsch/Français to Spanish)
- Private Transportation
- Private airport transfers
- Accommodation according to itinerary:
 - 3 nights in Quito
 - 2 nights in Shandia / Amazon
 - 1 night in La Calera / Cotacachi
 - 1 night in Tambillo
 - 1 night in Quilotoa
 - 1 night in Riobamba
 - 1 night in Cuenca
 - 1 night in Yunguilla
 - 1 night in Pifo
- Meals according to itinerary
 - (B = Breakfast / BL = Box Lunch / L = Lunch / D = Dinner)
- Entrance fees and activities included:
 - Middle of the World or Intiñan Museum
 - Panela project in Pacto
 - Yunguilla community immersion
 - Peguche weaving project
 - La Calera community stay
 - Cayambe infusion project
 - Quito city tour
 - Fundación Maquita visit
 - Lupine production project in Chugchilán
 - Quilotoa access
 - Quinoa project in Chimborazo
 - Tolte community project
 - Panama hat project in Cañar
 - Macana textile project in Gualaceo
 - Shandia Amazon activities
 - Amupakin visit

✗ PROGRAM DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International flights
- Domestic flights
 - Cuenca to Quito (CUE - UIO)
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Personal expenses
- Tips

💰 RATES PER PERSON (USD)

MTFT26 – FAIR TRADE IMMERSION JOURNEY

Rates	2 - 3 pax	4 - 6 pax	7 - 9 pax	10 - 15 pax
NET	USD 3.665,00	USD 3.465,00	USD 2.750,00	USD 2.420,00
GROSS	USD 5.235,00	USD 4.950,00	USD 3.930,00	USD 3.460,00

Note: Rates for 2 to 3 passengers include a guide/driver, while rates for 4 passengers or more include a guide and a driver

 COMMERCIAL CONDITIONS SUMMARY

Currency

USD. All payments must be received net of bank fees.

Payment Terms

Booking type	Commercial rule
FIT standard	No payment required for blocking before 90 days. Confirmation requires 30% deposit 60 days before travel. Final balance is due 45 days before travel.
Groups / tailor-made	No payment required for blocking before 120 days. Confirmation requires 40% deposit 90 days before travel. Final balance is due 60 days before travel.
Last-minute bookings	45 days or less: 100% at confirmation.

Cancellation Policy

All cancellations must be received in writing. Charges apply to the total confirmed booking value.

Time before departure	FIT standard	Groups / tailor-made
91+ days	0%	0%
90-61 days	0%	25%
60-45 days	30%	50%
44-31 days	70%	50%
30 days or less / no-show	100%	100%

Note: Non-refundable services may apply

Key Conditions

- Prices subject to availability at booking
- Non-refundable components override general policies
- Changes may generate additional costs
- Services confirmed upon payment

Force Majeure

- Recoverable funds will be refunded net of supplier costs.
- Alternative arrangements will be proposed whenever possible.

 **ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS**

- The itinerary may be adjusted due to operational, weather-related, or safety conditions to ensure a smooth and responsible travel experience.
- Wildlife observation depends on natural conditions and cannot be guaranteed.