

experience quest



GALAPAGOS AND INCA TRAIL ADVENTURE SOUTH AMERICA – ECUADOR AND PERU

"I put this adventure together for the first time in 2002, for a group of 7 people. It being the first time we had run this itinerary, they lovingly named themselves "The Virgin Parents"! It was a nerve racking three weeks – delays and unpredictability are part of the experience in South America, but this had to run perfectly. Happily it was a huge success, and our Virgin Parents are now best of friends thanks to this unforgettable holiday. We expect this year's adventure to be just as memorable, I hope you can join us"

Jonathan Cassidy, Managing Director

- ❖ Introduce yourself to South America in Quito, a world heritage site
- ❖ Stretch your legs in the cloud forest, while trekking to our conservation project in Santa Lucia
- ❖ Spend 5 days swimming, sunbathing and island hopping through the Galapagos
- ❖ Work on our longest standing project in the largest shanty town in Peru – Villa Maria
- ❖ Give yourself the ultimate finale, trekking along the Inca Trail to the city of Machu Picchu

Dates: **Saturday 1st – Saturday 22nd October 2011** – Three weeks

Cost: **£4,350** – Includes all costs on the ground (except evening drinks, souvenirs and a few lunches), travel insurance and a £250 donation to our charity Quest4Change. International flights are separate.

Find out more or make a booking. Contact us on 01273 777206 or email info@experiencequest.com

Your Quest

Bored of hearing all those wonderful anecdotes from your friends? Green with envy after yet another set of mind blowing photos from their latest travels? Here's your chance to surpass all their stories, and with that little extra bit of luxury. This is an active adventure, trekking through the forests and mountains of Ecuador and Peru, but always coming back to some pretty special accommodation at the end of each day. You also have the chance to give back, taking part in one of our longest standing projects in the Villa Maria shanty town in Peru.

Further information

Food & drink Included in the cost of the trip are meals in some fantastic restaurants, sampling some of the best food South America has to offer. While we will cover drinks during meals, we may ask you to chip in if it turns out to be a particularly thirsty night. Also, there will be a couple of occasions while in towns when the group will be free to explore and as such we will leave lunches to your own discretion. This will be only 2 or 3 occasions though.

Accommodation We have carefully picked some real characterful hotels whenever we are in towns and cities, with all the comforts you would normally expect, but not in the cold characterless style of a high rise hotel block. Of course, while on the Inca Trail, we have 2 person tents, but again will make this as comfortable as realistically possible.

Weather October is the end of the dry season, so the weather should still be stable and dry on the whole. As we are travelling from jungles to mountains to islands though, you should be prepared for a whole range of temperatures.

Leaders You will be accompanied by only our best and most experienced staff. We have always said that our leaders bring the trip to life for you –you will not be disappointed here! Their knowledge, professionalism and enthusiasm are unparalleled.

Preparation Once you have booked onto the trip, we will be with you every step of the way in the build up for departure, helping to sort flights, insurance, providing recommendations on kit, anything you should need.

Travelling alone? Not a problem. Our price is based on two people sharing, and if you are joining this trip on your own, you will be sharing a room or a tent with someone of the same sex. If you would prefer to have your own room and tent, you can pay our single supplement of £200. Please note, this does not include having an individual cabin at the Galapagos, please contact us if you would like to ask about supplements for this.

What to do next? If you'd like to find out more, just give us a call and we can fill you in with some more information. To book a place on this trip, get in touch and we will send you a booking form together with a copy of our terms and conditions. Any questions, just give us a call on 01273 777206.

Giving Back

Situated on the outskirts of Lima, The shanty town of Villa Maria is a marvel of adversity in the face of uncertainty. With parents working long hours to support their families, children are often left to their own devices. Life is hard however the people are warm, kind and welcoming. It's amazing how those with so little are often the most generous. This is an opportunity to give something back, constructing a simple home for a family in the community or giving a child the attention that they deserve. You will be making an important contribution to the project, but the impact it will have on you is sure to be equally dramatic, if not more so.



Adventure Itinerary

Days 1-2: Departure from London to Quito

Departing early from London, we have a long flight to Ecuador's capital, Quito. Fortunately, our hotel is only a short drive from the airport, and the magical rooms awaiting us in Café Cultura are sure to take our minds off the jetlag. After a well earned sleep, we make our way out the next day into the colonial centre of Quito, a labyrinth of sumptuously decorated churches and squares, all combined with the modern day colour of the Ecuadorian people.

Days 3-5: Santa Lucia cloud forest reserve

A one hour drive from Quito takes us to "Mitad del Mundo", the middle of the world – well we couldn't come all this way without visiting the equator! Moving on, we cross a mountain pass and start our descent into the cloud forest. With every turn our vehicle takes, the vegetation gets thicker, as does the humidity. Our first night we have it easy, the vehicles take us straight to the door of the Maquipucuna lodge, but don't get too used to that. After a morning chorus of birds, frogs and cicadas, we have a 2 hour trek up to the Santa Lucia lodge – the view will make all that exertion worth it!

Days 6-10: Cruising through the Galapagos Islands

Flying from Quito to Guayaquil on the Ecuadorian coast, then 600 miles out to sea, we are met by our crew which will be looking after us on our Galapagos experience. Travelling on a small motor yacht (maximum 16 people), we really will enjoy a personalised service and will feel as if we have these islands to ourselves. Travelling to a different island each day, and taking time to swim, snorkel and sleep in between, our expert guides will bring this place to life for us and explain just why it was and continues to be such a defining habitat for the entire living world.

Day 11-13: Lima and the Villa Maria project

Lima, like Quito, was once a Spanish colonial hub, and many of the buildings are still standing, albeit a little worn. Today, we have the unique opportunity to experience two extremes of reality of South American life. First, we will visit some of the areas once populated by the Spanish aristocracy, with architecture, wealth and extravagance to prove it. Then, just 30 minutes down the road, we have an opportunity to be part of the shanty town of Villa Maria, where Quest has been working since 1998. Conditions are harsh but the project is thriving and we are delighted to be able to harness energy together with the community to ensure that our work is completed.

Days 14-15: Cuzco and the Sacred Valley of the Incas

Flying into Cuzco is a fascinating experience, snow capped peaks, rolling hills and a city in the shape of a puma (so legend tells us at least). We have a couple of days acclimatising to the altitude and enjoying some of the incredible sights this city has to offer. A mixture of Inca and Spanish construction, you could literally walk around this town for weeks and not get bored. However, an even more impressive sight awaits us, and this time we have to earn it.

Days 16-19: The Inca Trail to Machu Picchu

During these next four days, we will be putting as many luxuries as we possibly can your way – good food, porters at your beckoned call, morning, afternoon AND evening tea! We will however be under canvas, and have some pretty tall hills to 'stroll' over. Every corner you turn though will treat us to beautiful view after beautiful view, and the Inca constructions also become progressively more impressive, until finally on the fourth day, Machu Picchu appears out of the swirling mist. Was it worth it, I think it was!

Day 19: Cuzco, our farewell party

Anyone who has been on a Quest Expedition will tell you that the last night party is one of the highlights, we're not going to make any exceptions to this.. A last tour of the markets in town to pick up some gifts and souvenirs, and it's time to start sampling the local delights – Pisco Sour anyone?!

Days 20-21

Time to make our way back home, it had to happen sooner or later