

*The Spirit of Ecuador ~*  
A Photographic and Cultural Expedition  
With Professional Photographer  
Karen Gordon Schulman ~ September 16-25, 2018



Highlights of Your Journey

- Travel to Ecuador, with a local Ecuadorian guide and photo instructor/tour leader Karen Gordon Schulman.
- Tour Colonial Quito and Saquisilí indigenous market.
- Accommodations in the heart of your photographic locations.
- Hummingbird photography in the Cloud Forest.
- Wander the quaint cobblestone streets of Cuenca, and visit local village markets.
- Photograph Ingapirca, the Machu Picchu of Ecuador, and El Cajas National Park.
- Take an optional excursion on your last day in Cuenca to immerse yourself in the Baños hot springs.

For more information or to register, contact  
Strabo Photo Tour Collection: 607-756-8676  
[www.phototc.com](http://www.phototc.com)



**Welcome** to a land of endless discovery. Visiting **Ecuador** is finding a paradise full of wonder and astonishing natural attractions. This itinerary has been designed to provide you with the premier photo locations that Ecuador has to offer: from the **Colonial City of Quito**, to the **cloud forest**, **Avenue of the Volcanoes**, through the quaint village street scenes of **Cuenca**, where we will also have a chance to photograph the local village markets. Focus on the rich land, the people, and crafts. We will take time to learn about the people of this country and about the historical perspective of their fine crafts. Many of the indigenous people who live in these areas still maintain their cultural manifestations through dress, language (Quechua), and festivities.



Ecuador is rapidly becoming a prime destination for photographers and naturalists because the land is being wisely protected with a system of national parks and private reserves. The comfortable inns and haciendas in the midst of our photographic locations allow us to relax and enjoy Ecuador, photographing the plunging valleys, majestic mountains, breathtaking gardens, beautiful colonial architecture, Indian markets, and little villages lost in the Andes.

Karen looks forward to sharing her love for this incredible country and people during our very special cultural and photographic journey. During the tour, Karen will offer group photography reviews, inspiration and education as well as individual guidance and instruction as needed.

## Your Tour Leader



Photographic artist, writer and educator, **Karen Gordon Schulman** is based in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. She majored in education and psychology at Penn State, and did graduate work at Manhattanville College. In 1979, Karen followed her photographic passion, studying fine art and commercial photography at UCLA. She uses a camera to capture the essence of a place and in the lifelong process of self-discovery. From her hand-painted silver prints and Polaroid manipulations to digital multiple exposures and now, iPhoneography, "It's not about the tool" is Karen's philosophy. In addition to creating art with her iPhone, Karen leads iPhoneography workshops throughout the year and offers guidance during photo tours to those who have an interest.

Since 1985, when Karen created Focus Adventures in Los Angeles, she has been offering small group photographic workshops and tours that emphasize using the camera for enrichment of creative spirit and development of personal vision. She has experience working with all ages, from 7 to 70 and beyond, and is dedicated to incorporating trip participants' personal awareness with once-in-a-lifetime travel opportunities. Karen has been working with Strabo Photo Tour Collection since 2000. [www.focusadventures.com](http://www.focusadventures.com)



*"I encourage each person to give themselves permission to make mistakes, permission to create," Karen says. "The more we learn to "see" with our mind, heart, and spirit, life becomes more of an adventure. I welcome all skill levels and enjoy offering guidance to those with stronger left-or right-brain approaches to photography, to strengthen the other side."*

*"On a photo tour, I enjoy guiding participants to expand their creativity and/or technical skills, increase their confidence and have fun! Instruction can be as much or as little as they prefer. I look forward to seeing you on one of my tours!"*

## Itinerary

### **September 16**

#### **Home – Quito, Ecuador**

Today fly to Quito, Ecuador. At 9,000 feet in elevation, Quito is one of the world's highest capitals, and one of South America's most historic and charming cities. The majority of flights arrive late evening and there will be a group transfer to your accommodations in the heart of Quito (group transfer time to be announced). Your lodge is a beautiful house converted into a boutique hotel, located in the charming neighborhood of La Foresta. Enjoy dinner on your own, or simply rest and relax, preparing yourself for the tour to start tomorrow morning. Overnight Casa Aliso.



### **September 17 Colonial City of Quito**

There will be an introductory meeting and breakfast this morning with Karen and all participants at approximately 9AM. Meet your local guide in the hotel lobby at 10AM, and enjoy a tour of Colonial Quito, including winding streets and architecture that reflect the Indian and Spanish culture dating back to the sixteenth century. Quito is also an important World Heritage Site of plazas, churches, and cathedrals. Some of our stops include Independence Square with its Presidential Palace, the dazzling gold-leafed La Compania Church, and the San Francisco Square. After lunch we will visit the Solar Museum of Intianan, at the Equator before returning to the hotel. Overnight at Casa Aliso. (B, L)

### **September 18-19 Cloud Forest - Nono**



Leaving the city behind you will find an oasis of peace and tranquility, along the Eco-route of the Hummingbirds. Surrounded by magnificent mountains, bathed by creeks and waterfalls, decorated with wildflowers, bromeliads and orchids, the village of Nono is the perfect destination for nature lovers, hikers, birders, photographers and those who enjoy meeting local people and learning about culture and history. The area is known as "Boca Mountain" where there are strong winds from the east, and the fog from the cloud forest produces moisture everywhere you look. Lunch will be at a private reserve, with plenty to photograph in this beautiful setting.

There will be another full day in the lovely village of Nono, interacting and photographing with the smiling faces of this region. Take a lovely hike with your local guide and photo leader to capture

waterfalls, cloud forest, and spectacular landscape images. Enjoy photographing a hacienda in this beautiful setting, and get to know the people who live here. Return to your lodge where you will experience an Ecuadorian cooking lesson at your homestay. Overnight Villa Doris & other country house (B, L, D both days).

### **September 20 Riobamba**

Every Thursday hundreds of indigenous people from the mountains prepare to make the journey towards Saquisilí where they gather for market day. They arrive in the early hours of the morning, sometimes while it is still dark, and set up their stalls to showcase the variety of products they have come to sell. The whole town is converted into a vibrant market where one can walk through the central plaza and shop for handicrafts of all kinds.

The market vendors will sell everything from pots and pans, to pigs and goats, and colorful handicrafts. The market is well known for its animal market. Food stalls will sell a variety of local specialties. The market, as with many of the markets in Ecuador, is a chance for locals to socialize and an opportunity to wear their finest. Enjoy this truly authentic market set amongst the stunning and spectacular Andean mountains. Continue on to your accommodations for the evening. Overnight Hacienda La Andaluza (B, L, D).



### **September 21 - 23 Ingapirca - Cuenca**

This morning we will have an early transfer south, capturing the breathtaking landscapes along the route. There will be time to photograph the largest and best-preserved Inca ruins in all of Ecuador. Ingapirca allows you to see the world through different eyes, showing you another relationship to nature and with your own spirit. This is the Ecuadorian Machu Picchu, and it offers a distinctive gaze at one of humankind's most powerful civilizations. Enjoy a lovely lunch at a Posada before continuing your drive to Cañar, where there is a beautiful church, with a landscape of mountains in the background. Your final destination for the evening is Cuenca. Here you will discover the beauty and charm of the most beautiful colonial city of Ecuador.

The next morning you will head out with Karen and your Ecuadorian guide to explore and photograph Cuenca and its surroundings. The beauty and colonial atmosphere is best experienced on foot. Begin with a walking tour of the Old Town takes you through

magnificent churches, beautiful old buildings with wrought iron balconies and carved wooden doors, flower and handicrafts markets, art galleries, workshops and all the wonders that Cuenca offers its visitors. Admire magnificent historic houses perched on cliffs high above the rushing Tomebamba River, which separates Old and New Towns. Later in the day drive through some modern neighborhoods where you will then be treated to an incredible panoramic view of the city from the vantage point of Turi. Your day will conclude with a visit to a traditional Panama hat factory.





The last day in Cuenca will be very unique - you will be able to visit and photograph local artisans in villages just outside the city. You will learn to appreciate their family traditions and daily life. Visits may include the small villages of Chordeleg and Bulcay, where traditional weavers show you the authentic side of Ecuador. These bucolic towns are well known for their handicrafts, such as the macanas (shawls) that women have woven from alpaca wool for centuries. Given time and interests of the group there may be visits to San Bartolome, a small town famous for its crafty, handmade guitars, you'll visit a local shop to observe the process of making this instrument or

Gualaceo, situated along the banks of the Santa Barbara River, with a quiet central square, church and market with folkloric handicrafts and colorful textiles. Return to Cuenca this afternoon, where you can enjoy additional photography on your own or those wishing to take part in an optional activity can travel on your own to Baños, to enjoy the hot springs and spa treatment. Piedra de Agua Spa provides wonderful treatments, and a restaurant for anyone who is interested. Overnight Santa Lucia (B, L; B, L; B)

### **September 24 Guayaquil**

Depart the hotel and enjoy a morning tour of El Cajas National Park enroute to Guayaquil. The park is a high-altitude area west of Cuenca, Ecuador. It's known for trails through evergreen cloud forests and hundreds of lakes, such as Laguna Toreadora. It is also home to rich wildlife including Andean condors, giant hummingbirds and raccoon-like coatis.

Afterwards, continue your drive to Guayaquil with photo stops along the way. Rooms will be provided to freshen up, re-pack, for your evening flight home (time to be announced). If your return flight is early in the morning, you can overnight and be transferred tomorrow. Overnight Hotel Ramada (B)

### **September 25 Guayaquil - Home**

If you spent the evening in Guayaquil you will be provided with a transfer to the airport this morning.

## General Information



**Land cost: \$2995**, based upon a minimum of 9 paying passengers, maximum of 12. All of our program prices are based on double occupancy. There is a \$400 small group surcharge if 4-8 paying passengers.

**Single room supplement: \$495**, Single rooms are subject to availability. We try to accommodate single travelers who request single accommodations, as well as single travelers who are looking for a roommate. If a single room is requested, we are unable to find a suitable roommate, or you are in a single for another reason, you will need to pay the single supplement.



**The land cost includes:**

- Group transportation for tour events in the tour van.
- Accommodations based on two people sharing a room.
- Services of driver guide during the tour.
- Meals as listed in itinerary.
- Extensive pre-departure information and services.
- Photo Instruction by Karen Gordon Schulman.

**The land cost does not include:** International air fare; air fare tax; airport transfers; additional transfers or accommodations that may be required by those not traveling with the group; any meals not listed as included; activities listed as optional, or those taken on your own; passport expenses; personal medical or travel insurance; any expenses of a personal nature or those not listed in what is included; tips to guides and service staff.

Please contact Strabo if you would like assistance with **International Airfare**.

## Deposits, Cancellations AND Refunds

A deposit of \$750 (\$500 on domestic tours) per person is required. Specific tours may require an additional deposit due to accommodation bookings or transportation requirements. If applicable these will be noted on your invoice. Payment in full is required when bookings are made less than 120 days before the departure date. Space is subject to cancellation by Strabo if payment is not received when due.

If a passenger wishes to cancel they must send notification in writing to: Strabo International Tour, Co., P.O. Box 580, Dryden, NY 13053; fax 208-545-4119. At the time we receive your notification, the following per person charges apply:

- 91 days or more before departure: \$300 cancellation fee (\$150 fee on domestic tours), plus Strabo's costs, as well as fees that are charged by the suppliers providing the services included in your tour, and/or the airlines providing the air transportation.
- 61-90 days before departure: \$500 (\$250 on domestic tours) minimum cancellation fee, plus Strabo's costs, as well as fees that are charged by the suppliers providing the services included in your tour, and/or the airlines providing the air transportation. Fees may range from 25% to 100% of tour costs.
- 60 days or less before departure or anytime after departure: NO REFUND.

**Refunds for services that are voluntarily not used by you cannot be made.**

## Fitness And Health

The trip is designed to be fun and adventurous. Photo opportunities are in villages, or around the accommodations. It can be moderately strenuous if you take advantage of walks each day, sometimes uphill in the heat, mud, cold, or high altitude (7000 -10,000 feet). You should discuss this altitude with your physician. Anyone who is reasonably fit should be able to participate in all scheduled walks, but if you have questions about how much activity is involved, please inquire further. At present, no inoculations are required for entry from the United States or Canada

## Food & Accommodations

Food and water are generally safe in Ecuador; however we do recommend taking precautionary medicine with you in case you are affected while traveling. Your local guide can offer guidance if you have concerns. Ecuadorian food is not spicy. Menus are usually simple, but the food is always good and plentiful. Breakfast menus are much like those in North America. Rice, meat, beans, and vegetables are usually served at lunch and dinners. Local cheeses are quite good. Delicious fruits and juices are abundant. Accommodations are clean, comfortable and pleasant, ranging from haciendas to hotels.

## Insurance

**Each participant must be covered by medical insurance that is valid overseas.**

***We strongly urge you to evaluate your risk and to take out insurance on your trip.*** It is vital for you to realize that if you experience a delay or find it necessary to cancel or cut short your trip for any reason, you will lose part or the entire sum you've invested in it (see the section "Deposits, Cancellations and Refunds" in the trip brochure).

Travel insurance helps to minimize the risk of monetary losses you would incur in the event of a delay of your departure due to weather, airline strike, missed connection, etc., your inability to travel for reasons such as illness, injury, unforeseen financial complications and other personal circumstances, or if you were required to cut your trip short for medical or any other reasons.

**There are restrictions and limitations on any insurance program.** For this reason, please read carefully the enclosed pamphlet, which outlines their program of trip cancellation, baggage, and medical insurance. Trained agents are available to answer your questions, so don't hesitate to call the toll free number in their brochure. It is to your advantage to apply for insurance at the earliest possible time, so don't delay in making a decision.